THE REAL AND THE NEGATIVE

BY B. K. MALLIK

AUTHOR OF
THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP

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The book attempts to resolve the outstanding conflicts of human experience. Beginning with the usual suggestion that the categories of thought and practice have reached an *impasse*, it meets the sceptical claim by a fresh theory of doubt. It then raises a constructive structure to resolve the age-old conflicts between the categories, on the basis of a fresh interpretation of the law of contradiction. The interpretation is untraditional, and *The Real and the Negative* came out in a form which has no resemblance in any tradition.

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Since its inception in the critical atmosphere of Oxford it has taken the author nearly two decades to complete the book.

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AND
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AN INDIAN STUDY IN CONFLICT

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AND
THE NEGATIVE

B. K. MALLIK
M.A.

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WOKING

TO MY

MOTHER

AND MY

LOVE

PREFACE

I FEEL I owe an apology for introducing to a keen and sophisticated century an unusual product of a long protracted thought. Neither its youth, who has either to fall into line on the field of battle, or seek life in despair in the raw, nor its aged and elderly who have to choose between staging a defence and improvising an attack, can have any use for an account of the universe. And yet for long years it has seemed to me—perhaps to many others—that the steady drift of historic events pointed to such an account as the only solution of the outstanding confusion in thought and practice. I have no doubt that the strictly modern mind, whether it is old or young, must be groping after a radical change in the whole of our traditional outlook, and perhaps one may exaggerate and add that the universe itself is in the throes of a momentous change. To be precise, if we do propose to extricate ourselves from the age-long recurring tangles of warfare and settlements by persuasion, not only our notion of Divinity but also our personal dignity or moral values may have to be re-defined. The ages that conscientiously crystallized man's efforts into types of social schemes and buttressed them for long centuries with faiths and technique are gone. The conflict and clash among human interests in the background of a larger and more mysterious Armageddon seem no longer to be the absorbing objective of the human race. Instead, there is a genuine desire to conclude conflicts, if possible, and realize the life of harmony and unity. If scepticism in diverse forms has steadily infected all spheres of human existence, a persistent desire to get at the heart of mystery and realize the kernel of manhood has also steadily grown. It will be a mistake to hold that the society of mankind has been drifting to rank confusion and absolute disaster.

But it may well be that the system that we are suggesting

may not be complete or comprehensive enough to meet all tastes and temperaments, much less the needs of the human race as a whole. It may even be honestly questioned as not being lucid enough or altogether fair to the claim of traditional views. In any case, a much more elaborate analysis of both speculative and practical issues has to be done before it could be worked into every groove of thought and practice. No system can be expected to answer the diverse issues from the varied angles of life and thought. And if the ancient and modern systems deserved long commentaries to bring them into line with the concrete and detailed issues of human experience, this system need not be an exception to the general rule.

But it need not be unusual to point out that the system itself stands for good or evil on a strictly logical basis. It has no alignment with esoteric, poetic or scientific assumptions. It should be easy and possible to test its accuracy, although the logic on which it rears itself is not identical with the traditional formulation of it. It so happens that it built its own foundation by formulating the celebrated laws, the landmark of all experience, afresh. To test its accuracy is practically to appreciate its original claim and as that stands supreme and unique, independent of anything that went before, it is difficult to see how one could help adopting it as unimpeachable.

And once the foundation of the system has been accepted as a matter of course, the conclusions that follow need not create any surprise or alarm by their unusual features. If the whole of traditional thought and practice is found to be untenable and a replacement of them by an altogether different scheme falls due necessarily, that might be an occasion for rejoicing. For after all, human mind has to go by clean and clear thinking as the final test or criterion of truth, whatever the milieu in which it may find itself. What could guarantee the prospects of the human race more than a logical test, which, if genuine, must be devoid of any assump-

tion and free from the stratagem of thought and practice? And it should be a matter for congratulation if this system does build itself on the discovery of an unimpeachable logic.

We do not, therefore, apologize for the grave and serious conclusions that we have come to, especially about the theory of Omnipotence and Incarnate Evil. Whatever the reaction to the accredited notions and however remote and distant they may be from any tradition ever proposed or practised by the human race, they will have to be accepted for two clear reasons: they stand on unimpeachable logic, the only criterion which mankind can trust and must abide by: and they are the only solution of the impasse centuries of human history have reached in thought and practice after age-long travail and unspeakable humiliation.

We do not propose to say anything more. We expect that our suggestions and effort will be taken at their true worth, and if any imperfection has crept into our statement of the system we are sure it will be discovered and remedied by intelligent and sincere co-operation.

We might be excused, however, if we refer to some personal history cradling the inception of this scheme in the early decades of the twentieth century. It was in the critical atmosphere of Oxford that the first glimmerings arose, and after that the period of incubation was staged in the author's own country.

The two periods covered over twenty years and after that the atmosphere of Oxford had to be re-sought to give the scheme its final shape. In fact, it took the author two long years to formulate the scheme in the vicinity of the old university which had completely changed since he left Oxford in 1923 after twelve years' residence. There was a new mood in the air, unlike any that the author had known in his undergraduate days. It was as far distant and remote from the cloistered medievalism as it was alien to the nineteenth-century idealistic renaissance. Since the war the commercial wave had left its deep marks on the scholastic

pride and opulent imperialism; and the historian is sure to trace the new era of scepticism in Oxford since that commercial infection. But whether Oxford became unduly sceptical and commercial in her outlook, or in the depths of her soul still cherished the old cloistered dreams, the author found it perfectly easy to work under her beneficent shelter. The old proverb about the intimacy and comradeship with which Oxford never fails to bless her alumni, old and young, rang true. It seemed to the author as if he never left his old haunts of the undergraduate days, nor lost a shred of the intimacy or affection which fell to his lot out of the delicacy of English generosity. And the whole picture would have been flawless indeed if the poignant grief for the absence of two of his dearest friends had not shot across it a dark and impenetrable line. Tommy Harries of Balliol and Sydney Lewis of Exeter, who among others associated themselves with what was known of the scheme in the twenties of this century wholeheartedly, were gone. Gone also was the younger brother of the author, whose stand for purity of life and unusual sacrifice for truth and humanity would always compare with the best that history ever recorded. A. K. Mallik in his own way served truth as Mahatma Gandhi does or as many others who gave their life for pure idealism ever did.

The Rector of my College, Dr. R. R. Marett, was the first responsible philosopher who read the metaphysic in typescript; and Professor C. C. J. Webb of Magdalen and Oriel read it in proof. I have been in intimate contact with both of these distinguished members of Oxford University ever since I became a member in 1912. The only other person to whom I should like to express my gratefulness is my friend Professor S. Radhakrishnan of Oxford University who took special interest in the publication of the book.

B. K. M.

EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD
August 1939

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PART ONE

CHAPTER I

THE TRUE SCEPTIC

Contemporary claim that philosophic systems neutralized one another and produced nothing but confusion of thought—complete failure to reconcile the categories—significance of the claim—does it mean scepticism?—absolute or relative scepticism?—no such thing as absolute scepticism—relative scepticism equally dubious—both the sceptic and the philosopher have a claim—analysis of the traditional position of the philosopher and the sceptic—both the philosophic and sceptical position reducible to uncertainty—neither can abandon the Reality or the Negative—the issue of uncertainty or doubt is the main issue—our enquiry begins with this issue—the same as Cartesian.

A CLAIM has steadily arisen in the twentieth century to the effect that the total output of philosophic contribution till to-day amounts to nothing but a confusion of thought. It has been suggested that, as a result of perpetual dissensions among the philosophers, each philosophic system came to contradict the fundamental principle of every other. Except for periodic intervals when some one school of thought or other happened to prevail over the rest, the net result to-day is that the theories so far suggested neutralize one another, and that most effectively. Even those keen and original minds who re-opened the philosophic enquiry every time the disagreements among the philosophers came to a head, invariably failed to suggest the principle that would or could remove their mutual contradiction. The categories which formed the basis of all the systems remained obdurate and uncompromising.

To suggest only a few instances, the category of infinity stood opposed to the category of the finite, the category of individuality to the category of universality, the category of freedom to that of law, the category of mind to that of

matter, the category of consciousness to that of object, and so on. The categories in these pairs stood as logical opposites or as incompatibles, so that no category could be reduced to its counter category. Not only were they independent and true so that neither could refute the other; they denied each other and could not be drawn into the compass of a single organic system. We need not go into detail to illustrate this failure; the grounds suggested are obvious enough, and ones with which every student of philosophy ought to be familiar, whether they are altogether valid or not.

What, however, it is necessary that we should discuss is the true and precise significance of this contemporary claim. Is it after all the strictly modern way of disputing the philosophic claim? Have we to take it as a revival of Scepticism in the twentieth century with the challenge to philosophic enquiry and its known results? And if it so happens that this claim has to be taken as the claim of the modern sceptic, in what sense exactly have we to take it? In the sense of absolute scepticism or in the sense of relative scepticism? The sceptic, as is well known, has been supposed to hold both positions: (*a*) the position which denies all reality and is emphatic in claiming that there is nothing, (*b*) the position which denies all knowledge and is emphatic in claiming that we do not or cannot know or characterize Reality truly, even if we have to believe that Reality is.

There are noted individual thinkers who seem to be of opinion that this twentieth-century sceptical claim should be interpreted as an instance of absolute scepticism. They seem to hold that the only available proof which has any legs to stand on is the proof by the sceptic that there is nothing. To them, the pure Negative is the only conceivable possibility. The Positive or the Reality has no sense unless we propose to equate it with Nothing—between Reality and Nothing it is difficult to draw a line.

But the question arises, what exactly is one to understand by the proof of the Negative? Can we seriously avow that we ever had to deal with the actual presence or existence of

Nothing? Yet what else can conceivably constitute its proof, unless it is literally the actual presence of Nothing? If Nothing is actually there, nothing else can be there. Such an eventuality could not possibly leave any mind, mortal or immortal, in any doubt about Nothing. And no other situation can conceivably create the certainty or necessity about the Negative.

But could even the omniscient mind preserve the Nothing in actual existence while there lay side by side with it its actual proof? Would not the presence of the proof itself neutralize the actual presence of Nothing, as the slightest touch of foreign matter is supposed to taint fatally the purity of milk?

The fact which no logic can disown is that there is nothing which does or can cohere with the Nothing; if there is anything conceivably absolute it is the Nothing. Proof of Nothing is a misnomer. The absolute sceptic of history, in whose lore we have been brought up, must have been only a magician, whether he was Nagarjuna or Pyrrho. He must have dramatized the part of the absolute sceptic and acted it to an audience predisposed to appreciate his skill. And it was not he who left the stage as the absolute sceptic but the audience under his spell, who went home in pitch darkness with a nightmare waiting for them. Literally we have had nothing more serious than a story or play-acting on the theme of absolute scepticism. There has never been a vindication of absolute scepticism as, in the nature of things, there could not be. In fact, the nearest approximation to the absolute sceptic appeared in the man and woman who were in doubt or suspense or anguish. Nothing more serious or catastrophic ever marked the credential or career of the absolute sceptic in the whole of human history. Nothing else could or ever would.

How then is it possible to believe that the contemporary claim about the utter futility of philosophic contribution really meant absolute scepticism? If individual thinkers still persist in holding that it did, we can only think that like the

mystic, who has certainly a good deal to say for himself, those thinkers are not intelligible to our limited understanding.

But do we improve our prospects, necessarily, if we take this claim in the sense of relative scepticism, rather than the absolute? Does it become any the clearer if it is understood to mean that the philosophers failed to develop or produce a valid and consistent knowledge of Reality? And assuming that they did fail, what exactly is meant by the failure to produce the knowledge of Reality?

A distinction is generally drawn between the statement that Reality is and the statement that Reality is such and such. We are supposed to know Reality when we characterize it, and not when we simply experience that Reality is. The point of the relative sceptic seems to be that even if it cannot be denied that Reality is, it cannot be affirmed that Reality is known; we have no experience about the qualities or the characteristics of Reality.

But what, again, is the point of the charge that Reality cannot be or has not been known, assuming that it was truly a fact? The point is that the fact or the admission that Reality is does not amount to very much as a proof of Reality, so long as it has not been supplemented by knowledge that Reality is such and such. The assumption behind it is that the mere being of Reality is tantamount to its nothing, an assumption which lies to the credit of even such a potent and orthodox speculation as the Hegelian.

But what could even Hegel mean by the dictum, Being is Nothing? It would be absurd to think that Hegel was not alive to its patent contradiction, as was everybody else who followed him in the wake of philosophic speculation. There must have been some deeper meaning attached to it which the Hegelian scholars alone can elucidate.

To many it would seem obvious that if Reality has to be taken as something existent it is bound to have characteristics. The Reality which is the contrary of Nothing must possess

what the Positive might conceivably possess. And to characterize Reality is to prove what the Positive, or the contrary of Nothing, necessarily possesses. In other words, the proof of the validity of these characteristics is expected to contradict the possibility of Nothing. So that it might with every reason be argued that the Nothing would stand uncontradicted so long as the characteristics of Reality have not been found. The problem for the philosopher is not merely to prove the existence of Reality but also to disprove Nothing. And this proof or disproof cannot arise or be produced so long as Nothing has not been completely disproved by a thorough characterization of Reality. The characterization of Reality alone, or the proof how, for instance, Reality can be infinite and finite, universal and particular, and so on, is the only means of proving Reality or disproving Nothing.

And this is exactly what is implied by the position of the relative sceptic. What he means to suggest is that, as we have so far failed to prove Reality either consistently or comprehensively, we have failed either to prove Reality or to disprove Nothing completely. The proof that Reality is does not appear to him to be sufficient or responsible enough. He is inclined to suspect it as merely technical or theoretical or academic. For all practical purposes, according to the sceptic, one can in the absence of characterization, almost suggest that there is no Reality or there is only Nothing.

We need not wait here to analyse the position that characterization is necessary to establish the proof of Reality or to find out what those characters must mean. We shall have plenty of opportunity to discuss both the issues later on. What we should do now is to find out if the claim of the sceptic is the only claim that can be vindicated. We have to find out if it is necessary to believe that the sceptic was altogether justified in holding that categorically negative conclusion—Reality has not been proved, or Nothing has not been disproved. We hold that the sceptic's claim in this cate-

gorical form is groundless. We hold equally that the philosopher has a claim which is by no means less responsible or consistent than that of the sceptic. But before we proceed to discuss our own view of the philosopher and the sceptic, let us analyse the traditionally avowed position of the sceptic and the philosopher a little more closely.

To begin with the sceptic, we do not see how it is possible that the sceptic can dispose of the fact that Reality cannot be disproved. As a matter of fact he has to recognize, at least, a few outstanding certainties:

(1) Nothing is easily disproved. The fact of the sceptic's so-called success in proving the existence of Nothing constitutes its disproof, if nothing else does.

(2) Reality is proved as soon as the disproof of Nothing arises. If Nothing, in the nature of things, cannot only be not proved but also can be disproved, it follows that there must be Reality; for there is no alternative possibility between Reality and Nothing.

(3) Again, if it be a fact that knowledge of Reality has been proved to be contradictory, it follows that the possibility of knowledge has to be recognized as a fact. You cannot deny the possibility and yet claim that knowledge has been found to be contradictory. In plain terms, the sceptic has to concede to the philosopher that the latter, at any rate, made an effort to characterize the Reality, though the result of that effort was a contradiction. In other words, the contradiction as a fact stands and is in itself an evidence of the possibility of knowledge.

(4) It might be claimed, further, that the failure to characterize knowledge did not mean anything more than a failure to reconcile the claims that the different pairs of categories indicated—for instance, infinite and finite, universal and particular, consciousness and object, mind and matter, freedom and necessity. In other words, it is not these categories that disappeared as a result of the failure but the different interpretations that were put upon them. Indeed, the worst that ever happened was that the philosophical systems that were built on the hitherto expressed meaning of

> those terms disappeared. The philosophers' conviction that a fresh investigation into their meaning was possible did not disappear. So that not only Reality survived and the possibility of knowledge, but also the possibility of characterizing Reality by a re-interpretation of those categories.

These simple facts or certainties which the sceptic has to recognize do not certainly imply that Reality has been proved conclusively. He has every right, even after the recognition, to claim that Reality has not been characterized. And the main issue that arises is, can he claim that the failure to characterize Reality is tantamount to a proof that Nothing is, or that there is no Reality? As a matter of fact he does; and the ground for that position so far known is the bare significance of the Hegelian dictum, "Being is identical with Nothing." Could we then take his claim for the categorical Negative as fully and truly justified? The dictum in its bare significance is not intelligible. That is obvious enough. To say that we cannot but believe in Reality is not the same thing as to say that there is no Reality. Besides, if we have to believe in the possibility of knowledge and of the re-interpretation of the categories we cannot, certainly, at the same time, believe that we live, move and have our being in Nothing.

Categorical Negative, in any sense, is out of the question; and the only Negative that may conceivably survive must necessarily be of a different type. And it is on the basis of that Negative, if on anything, that the sceptic will have the chance to survive with his claim that Reality has not been proved.

The question, therefore, is, what could be that Negative? And if it has to be recognized as a fact, how could it preserve the sceptic's main position? Could the sceptic still be expected to hold a truly negative position?

It does not seem that he could. The position of the sceptic would be reduced to uncertainty, the bane from which the

philosopher alone has been suspected hitherto to suffer. And this unfortunate situation will arise from the simple fact that while on the one hand the sceptic could prove the failure of knowledge, on the other hand he could not disprove Reality. He is tied between the possibility of the proof of Reality, on the ground that bare existence cannot be disproved, and the possibility of the proof of Nothing, on the ground that knowledge has been disproved. It will be difficult for him to abandon his faith in Nothing even as it will be impossible for him to deny the claim of Reality altogether. The strictly sceptical claim which is built on the faith in the Negative, pure and simple, will have to be shed and abandoned.

And an exactly similar fatality is bound necessarily to affect the chances of the philosophic creed. The philosopher, too, like the sceptic, will fail to abandon his faith in Reality even as it will be impossible for him to deny and disbelieve the Negative altogether. His contention that he did succeed most effectively in disproving the claim of Nothing, will stand. Equally would the indisputable fact that he succeeded in preserving his faith in Reality and possibility of knowledge survive. But what will not survive is his claim that he successfully characterized Reality and interpreted the categories. While it will always be conceded to him that he never had any reason to lose his faith in Reality and the possibility of knowledge, it will be equally claimed and asserted that he perpetually failed to realize that faith. And what could that failure or sheer misfortune in his speculative experiment imply if not a virtual confession that the Negative must be there, somehow operating to bring about these ever-repeated failures? In spite of his innate conviction that there is nothing but Reality he will have to presuppose its contrary, the Negative, to account for the failure of knowledge ever since it has been sought. And this predicament which puts the philosopher in the position where he can no more abandon his faith in Reality than he can deny or

disbelieve the Negative, is what is called the state of uncertainty.

May we not then conclude that the twentieth-century sceptical claim, if properly understood, ought to mean that the whole of our speculative life, whether it is dogmatic or sceptical, seems to be overlaid by the dense fog of uncertainty? Does it not seem clear that the question at issue is not merely whether the philosophers have failed to produce a consistent and comprehensive account of Reality; it is also whether the critics and the sceptics who claimed to have proved the inadequacy and insufficiency of the philosophic claim had really any consistent position to offer. It is not to be denied that our philosophic systems cheerfully neutralized one another; but it does not necessarily follow that our critics and sceptics did not equally cheerfully neutralize their main contention—the proof of the Negative.

What is it really that the sceptic held and professed as a matter of belief? If we accept the traditional view that he had no position of his own but most humbly criticized the position which the philosopher offered as a theory or a view of the Universe, it will not absolve us from confessing that the sceptic, at any rate, came to a definite conclusion as a result of his criticism. That conclusion was, that knowledge by its nature is inconceivable, or, Reality is not. There was a definite position and claim which the sceptic alone, and not the philosopher, held; and that position was the direct contrary of the philosophic claim. The philosopher was called upon to abandon his enquiry, on the ground that his repeated failures have more than established the Negative. Here is a very definite and pronounced sceptical position and view.

If, however, we do not attribute this position to the sceptic, and represent his case as one of merely analysing the philosophic position, need we make the distinction between the position of the philosopher and that of the sceptic, as the whole history of philosophic thought did not

scruple to do? If the sceptic is to be identified with the critic, he will be representing the philosopher himself in his mood of criticism or analysis. For the philosopher, like the prophet or the artist or the statesman, is bound to cultivate both the moods while he is working out his philosophic ideas: (*a*) the mood of what we call creation; (*b*) the mood of what we call revision. Every piece of work in whatever sphere of life implies both the moods as essential to its formulation. But the mood of revision or analysis is not the mood of scepticism; that mood, the mood of the sceptic, approaches all creation with the preconceived assumption that it was the Negative and not the Positive that could be proved and established. The sceptic does not, as a matter of fact, come to an analysis with a neutral mood and attitude. He is by no means the freelance that some historians try to call him in a moment of sheer desperation. He is the protagonist of the Negative as the philosopher is of the Positive. His analysis or criticism ought never to be confused with that of the critic.

If then, as a result of our investigation, we have to come to the conclusion that we can no more uphold the Negative than we can affirm the Positive, have we not reason enough to drop the traditional enquiry into the sharp cleavage between the dogmatist and the sceptic? Should not the twentieth-century sceptical claim be taken as a foreboding of the extremely unsettling feature of speculative existence —uncertainty? Is it not merely an indication that, as a result of our modern efforts to appreciate the achievements of our predecessors, we have realized to our great surprise that there is nothing to choose between the philosopher and the sceptic? Is it not a fact that the truth is not simply that it is only the philosophic systems that have neutralized themselves? The truth also is that both the dogmatic and the sceptical claims which have for long centuries fought for supremacy have been equally swallowed up by the fog of uncertainty.

What then should be the text of a fresh enquiry if we assume that the twentieth-century sceptical claim is not altogether unfounded? If we cannot re-open the analysis into the claims of dogmatism and scepticism, on the ground that they have been equally overwhelmed by uncertainty, does it not follow that we should proceed straight away to deal with uncertainty itself? That would be a straightforward course, and perfectly in keeping with the celebrated tradition which is supposed to have laid the foundation of modern philosophy. It seems that one can, without being unduly technical, claim that the starting-point of Descartes when he began his philosophic enquiry was laid in the heart of uncertainty or doubt as he preferred to call it. We feel we cannot do better than follow in the footsteps of the great French philosopher, especially as he was practically in the same state of mind on the eve of his enquiry as the twentieth-century critic who has been our chief guide.

But we do not certainly suggest that the need of such an enquiry as mentioned above is being universally felt at the moment. Even if it be a fact that uncertainty is the only conclusion that can follow from a strict and close view of our philosophic systems, it need not be asserted that every philosopher must be supposed to have drawn it. If faith dies hard, so does philosophic conviction or loyalty to a thought. Besides, it would be ridiculous to claim that even the truths that we see or cherish severally must be clearly of the same pattern and uniform texture. When and in what precise manner a truth will present itself to a thinker is a very difficult question to answer. Philosophers are not expected to see the same identical truth, much less at the same time or in the same place. And if this is true of the philosophers, it must be more so with the lay folk on the practical plane. It must be long before the rare light in the philosophic world can be expected to shed its reflection on the practical plane. As was so neatly said, the dialectic has many miles to travel before it reaches the market-place.

The conclusion of the twentieth-century sceptic need by no means be taken as a universal phenomenon. And if we prefer to deal with it, it is because we are assured that there is in it a good deal of indisputable truth. We may be wrong, but we cannot help believing that we have reached an *impasse* in the speculative world. It will be our care to give our evidence for it after we have finished our enquiry. We may only add at the moment that our decision to make this twentieth-century conclusion the text of an enquiry was considerably influenced by the discovery of a corresponding *impasse* in the practical world. As a matter of fact, when we discovered that the total output of our social efforts to realize the human values did not produce any better result than an *impasse* or confusion, we could not be in doubt about the validity of our starting-point. We were convinced that a fresh enquiry was due; and that it could not be started under better auspices than on the basis of the celebrated tradition of French philosophy. And it is only a question of time before other philosophers join us in the enquiry.

CHAPTER II

THE CARTESIAN TECHNIQUE

Cartesian theory of doubt or uncertainty—not bare negation but the state of alternatives—evidence—Descartes must have believed alternatives presupposed a common background—reason why Descartes took that background of human experience to be thinking or mind—no legitimate ground for confusing it with human mind—how the confusion arose—its inevitable effect on modern European thought—discredit of metaphysical enquiry and claim to subordinate the ontological to epistemological enquiry—significance of the Cartesian position in modern thought—Descartes initiated modern speculation by emphasising the significance of the sceptical claim and suggesting a method of enquiry—neither the warning about scepticism nor the method of enquiry was seriously noted—modern philosophy like the ancient failed to solve the problems.

THERE are two ways in which we can start our analysis of the state or mood of uncertainty. We can start with a review of the Cartesian methods and then supplement it by our own interpretation or we can start with our own interpretation and then compare it with the Cartesian conclusion.

We prefer to follow the first course. The immediate issue that arises, therefore, is, what exactly was Descartes facing when he deliberately started on the perilous road of doubting the whole of human experience. What exactly did he mean by doubt? Did he mean by doubt, the state of uncertainty? And if he did, how did he interpret or explain this strange phenomenon?

A review of this Cartesian issue is not meant to be a fresh addition to the already prodigious scholarship on Cartesian achievement. We may, on the contrary, be wrong altogether in the surmise or interpretation that we propose to suggest of Descartes' main position. It is no part of our

enquiry, again, to discuss Cartesian philosophy textually, as a scholar is normally expected to do. Our sole intention is to utilize a definite method which, it seems to us, is not remote from or inconsistent with the Cartesian procedure.

And yet, when we refer to the Cartesian method, it should not be supposed that we are merely referring to the high esteem in which Descartes held the geometrical method or the deductive, which begins with intuitions that are clear and distinct and proceeds systematically to draw a series of successive conclusions. Scholars of the Cartesian philosophy know precisely how this method differed from the method of both Aristotle and Bacon, and in what way exactly originality could be claimed for the strictly Cartesian. We have by now sufficient evidence to make a judicious estimate of this method in view of the enormous philosophic and scientific achievements that have followed since Descartes formulated his method. We do not feel that the deductive technique was the strongest point in the Cartesian method.

But what we are specially or directly interested in is the high regard that Descartes unstintingly paid to the technique of doubting by utilizing it for the purpose of discovering the clear and distinct intuitions without which his geometrical method could not work. We are anxious to know if he truly meant by it the state of uncertainty into which the human mind periodically falls; and if he did, how it was possible for him to conclude that it proved indisputably the validity of our belief in thinking.

There are scholars who would have us believe that by the technique of doubting all that Descartes truly meant was mere criticism and analysis of our habitual beliefs and practices. To him it was the only antidote to self-delusion, which was supposed to be the besetting sin of the human mind. He wanted men and women to practise the art of doubting or criticizing their ideas and beliefs, so that they could easily discover their irrational and artificial root. And if it be a fact that this is all that Descartes actually

meant by doubt, we see no reason why we should waste our time over Descartes.

There is, however, abundant evidence to show that Descartes might have meant by doubt something much more sinister than bare negation. It does not seem that the result of doubt was expected by Descartes to be necessarily a matter of rectifying mistakes or removing prejudices. It might easily have been something absolutely different from the simple process of contradicting an idea or belief by some other idea or belief. It seems certain that to Descartes doubting was nothing but a process which was inevitably to end in a steady and gradual disappearance of ideas and beliefs till, like the body skinned to the bone, human experience was reduced to the bare skeleton of the process itself. There is no other way by which we could account for the definite suggestion of Descartes that the process, if pushed to its logical limit, was capable of relieving us of all beliefs, not excluding the *a priori*, the geometrical, and the mathematical.

But if there is nothing to rebut the assumption about wholesale negation, may it not be suggested that the technical or logical form of the process of doubt was bound to be the same as we generally associate with the state of alternatives? Should we not assume that Descartes meant by uncertainty and doubt, the state of alternatives in which the mind stands literally divided and which inevitably leads to the disappearance of the alternative terms and propositions? If bare negation is incapable of producing a wholesale confusion, it is inconceivable that the Cartesian doubt could be accounted for by any other theory or idea than that of alternatives.

But could Descartes have consistently held that doubt itself as a process was bound to survive even if we assumed that it was nothing but a state of alternatives? Does the question of survival arise where we have to deal with alternatives? If the state of alternatives has any meaning, it

means that the alternative terms and propositions are bound to disappear. Nothing but complete extinction or frustration is the inevitable result from which alternatives are bound to suffer. And we may repeat again that Descartes was perfectly convinced that if the whole of human experience could be put to the grind of doubting the whole of its contents was bound to disappear. And the calamity which followed necessarily in the wake of uncertainty was not merely recognized by Descartes but dreaded universally as the harbinger of the fateful Negative.

Descartes, therefore, if we accept his conclusion about survival of mind, must be supposed to have meant very much more by the state of uncertainty or alternatives than the bare situation of contrariety. He must have meant that alternatives, in the state of contrariety, were bound to imply as their background some common belief or consistency. If two propositions or terms, for instance, happened to contradict one another, it is inconceivable that they would do so unless there was a third proposition or term which was equally implied by them. Descartes must have implied that differences which lead to incompatibilities must necessarily imply an agreement as the basis or root from which they could normally spring. We have to believe that in his opinion there was no other way in which incompatibility might or could arise between the differences which constitute alternatives.

And if we are at all correct in our surmise about Descartes' implications about the origin of alternatives, it need not be difficult to see why Descartes claimed that even the universal operation of doubt need not eliminate the possibility of some consistency as a surviving residuum. His clear and definite stand that at any rate doubt as a process survives could and must be taken to mean that the positive background of the last instance of doubt was bound to escape the universal wreckage. Even the most sweeping and comprehensive occurrence of doubt cannot be supposed to reduce human

experience to a state of utter and complete nothingness. The positive and the consistent, at any rate in its barest form, is bound to maintain itself even if doubt is pushed to its extreme logical limit.

But the question arises again, assuming that the consistent or the positive was bound to persist in some form or other, why should it be supposed to take the form of thinking? If we have to assume that doubt was meant to affect the whole universe of things, is it easy to believe that it will not succeed in touching the integrity of thinking mind? How could mind escape the fatal sting when its contrary, matter, has been from the beginning of creation, as it were, whetting the knife for its blood? Could any honest advocacy of materialism accept the claim to immunity on behalf of mind? If mind had no conceivable contrary to challenge its claim to existence, Descartes' conclusion about the indisputable validity of thinking might with some reason be accepted as plausible. But the unfortunate fact is that it never was free from serious complication.

What then is the explanation of this strange Cartesian assurance? Could we discover the secret of his unusual claim?

It seems to us that we may discover this secret if we for the sake of argument assume that Descartes, like many other philosophers, believed that it was only in mind and mind alone that doubts and beliefs were of any consequence. This supposition ought to give us the clue to that secret; and there is no reason why we should not make such an assumption on behalf of Descartes. We can and do no doubt fall into a state of uncertainty about what we call the whole content of our experience, the inorganic, organic, and psychical realities; and it follows that in the event of a wholesale doubt, we stand to lose them once and for ever. But it need not be supposed that we are ever outside the range of what we call our mind or experience, whether we are in belief or doubt. In a sense there is nothing that we

know which is beyond our consciousness. And what is of special importance to note is that even if we have to question or doubt the whole of experience, we need not imperil the validity or security of mind and experience. For it is necessary that mind, as such, must be there to make the act of thinking or doubting possible. If and so long as mind or experience is there, doubt of its contents, whether wholesale or retail, can be legitimately carried out. Where there is no human experience in any shape or form, neither doubt about nor belief in its contents has any meaning. If we have to believe that we can doubt the contents of human experience, we have equally to believe in the reality and possibility of human experience as its necessary condition or inevitable implication.

If Descartes, therefore, held that thinking or mind survived as the residuum of universal doubt, he might have simply meant that mind or thinking was essential to it. If doubt was to be considered as a fact, one cannot suppose that we could carry on that process without the direct agency of mind which means that mind, as such, could not be touched by doubt.

But the question still arises, what would or could be the state or nature of that mind which has to be presupposed as the background of the last instance of doubt? In what way exactly can the mind be expected to survive, as it must survive, after it has been denuded of all its contents by a devastating doubt? How would it stand in its stark integrity when all the ideas and views of the inorganic, organic, psychical, and supernatural realities which are supposed to form its contents have been swept clean of its wide range or capacious volume?

There is no reason why one should not grant that doubt can appear on the plane of the mind only. But does it follow that we can easily characterize the mind or thinking, which is bound to survive even after the most systematic mode of doubting has been carried out? Could we, strictly speaking, identify it by any chance with the

mind that has been known in human history? Could we conceivably think that we can find in it, when it exists as a bare background of the last tragedy in human experience, the idea of perfection from which Descartes derived the whole of his clue to the universe?

It does seem to be obvious that the mind, the logical possibility of which stands indisputably firm, could only just be allowed to retain its bare significance. We can only say that "mind," as such, will persist at the end of a systematic process of doubting which was bound to cost it the whole range of its contents. It is difficult to say anything more. And what mind, as such, may mean, we can perhaps partially visualize in terms of the different types of mind we know of, as they are arranged according to the scope and range of their contents. If the minds that are comparatively empty are regarded as clearly abnormal, will it be too much to suggest that the mind as a bare logical possibility may not deserve to be called even abnormal?

The conclusion seems to be irresistible that while Descartes might have been perfectly justified in claiming that mind, or thinking, was bound to prevail, he was altogether wrong in believing that such a mind would or could offer him any content which is sure to fructify into a system of philosophy. There was absolutely no reason for exploiting it for any purpose whatsoever, except for proving that the case of the absolute sceptic had no foundation in fact. It was sufficiently potent to disprove the claim of the absolute Negative and the overwhelming claim of uncertainty. But it could not help any philosopher to achieve any other purpose.

Why then did Descartes draw such a strange conclusion about mind? Was it a case of misconception on the part of the French philosopher?

If it was a case of misconception, it might be easily suspected that it arose from a confusion that Descartes might have inadvertently made between the mind that was only a logical possibility and the mind which was clearly an actuality. There can be no question that the two minds and

the corresponding enquiries which the Cartesian technique of doubting implied, were perfectly clear and distinct; and yet it does not follow that a confusion might not be made by even such a profound thinker or philosopher as Descartes.

It is another story whether Descartes did actually fail to keep the two minds and the two enquiries perfectly clear and distinct. That is a textual question for the Cartesian scholars to decide.

But not even a devoted scholar of Cartesian philosophy need deny that the mind, which, according to Descartes, was bound to survive systematic doubting, was necessarily different from the mind with which Descartes, the French philosopher, began the actual enquiry. While the one was evidently nothing but a logical possibility the other was definitely an existent fact. In so far as the systematic doubt did not take place, Descartes could not claim that it was anything more than a logical possibility. It could not with any consistency be identified with the other mind which was all the time actually present to carry on the enquiry.

Like the two minds, the two corresponding enquiries were equally perfectly clear and distinct: (*a*) the enquiry which began with the question of the possibility of doubting the whole of experience; (*b*) the enquiry which was found to be logically possible—the enquiry of actually doubting every detail or content of experience. The former, as every student of history knows, began and ended at a particular moment, while the latter could but be only logically complete, as apparently it could not in the nature of things be carried out.

Why was it then that Descartes claimed that the mind that was bound to survive the most systematic form of doubting had actually the idea of perfection as one of its contents, an idea sufficiently fruitful to offer to Descartes the chance of building up a whole metaphysic? What else but a confusion between the mind as a logical possibility and the mind as an existent fact could account for the fatal excess in the Cartesian claim?

Besides, if we assume that the Cartesian confusion was truly a fact, it becomes perfectly easy to see how and why Descartes came to discover in the surviving mind the idea of perfection. For it was not the surviving mind of a possible enquiry which never took place, but the surviving mind of an actual enquiry which did take place in which the idea was found.

Perhaps Descartes could have easily avoided this fateful confusion if it were ordained that he should have analysed a little more fully the process of systematic doubt which he so nobly conceived but never carried into practice. A little more analysis would have convinced him that, with the gradual progress of this process of doubting, side by side with the loss of its contents, the enquiring mind would have gone on diminishing in bulk and significance. Conceivably, it would not have taken it long to shed its human frame and escape the age-long clash with matter. And what would have happened further to despoil it of all its mature capacity it is not for human mind to visualize. At any rate, by the time it was reduced to its last extreme state where it merely served as the background of the last instance of conflict, it would have been left with a bare name to distinguish it from the pure negative. And could it still be expected to attract vigorously any philosopher who is anxious to derive from its contents a key to some fresh construction of the universe? Descartes would not have found in it the idea of perfection. On the contrary, he would have found it, in all likelihood, to be hardly more mature than what we try to describe as "pure being."

But as ill luck would have it, this initial mistake in the Cartesian enquiry which could have been easily avoided, vitiated its prospects considerably. If by any chance Descartes had not mistaken the existing mind for the indisputable survival of systematic doubting, he might have left behind a much more robust system of philosophy than he actually did. There might at any rate have been a new orientation,

instead of a repetition of the old method of analysing the contents of the mind, which had no claim to indisputable certainty. And this orientation could have been derived from the indisputable survival of the systematic doubt itself. We have definite reasons to believe that all this could have been done.

But as, most unfortunately, it was not done, the whole of modern philosophy, which was tenaciously built on the foundation which Descartes had left behind, by a cruel irony missed the chance, like the ancient or medieval, of developing a consistent system of the universe. In so far as it definitely and deliberately accepted the *cogito ergo sum*, modern philosophy never had the chance to raise the question of the validity of knowledge itself. The sceptic was put out of the way. To quote a common parlance, there was almost an icy silence about his ignominious exit. Even when a very mild form of scepticism reappeared after a few decades, it seemed as if it had not the heart to question the fundamental claim of Descartes. Whether we take Locke or Hume as the representative of scepticism, after Descartes had consolidated the claim of human experience, we do not find in either of them any sense of the inadequacy of the evidence behind *cogito ergo sum.* The fact is that the issues in which they were interested concerned the contents of human knowledge and not the validity or reality of human knowledge itself. Locke's enquiry simply implied that knowledge, as such, may be limited or deficient. Similarly, Hume's enquiry meant that it was not all knowledge that has a claim to acceptance but only some peculiar instances of it. The "particular," as we all know, was his great rediscovery at the expense of "relation" or "universal." The rationalists, on the other hand, were fully convinced that it was the "concept" or the "universal" that could truly claim to be called knowledge rather than the "particular." They too, like the empiricists, did not suspect that unless the foundation of knowledge itself had been once again seen to, it was not possible that

one could hang by the thread of any contents of that knowledge, whether they were sense-contents or concepts. Even Kant and the post-Kantians seemed to be totally unaware that Descartes had not proved the indisputability of the mind or thinking.

It does not seem that there has been a single instance of philosophic effort which can be taken as a strictly metaphysical enquiry since Descartes wrote. The best of the theories—for example, the Kantian or the post-Kantian or the systems which the rationalists like Spinoza or Leibniz left after them—were but dogmatic attempts built on assumptions which had no foundation in indisputable certainty. Between them and those systems of the ancient and scholastic philosophers which they were supposed to supersede, there was not much to choose; and it is well known that their total achievement did not succeed in solving any of the outstanding problems of philosophy.

Yet, by a cruel destiny, the philosophic misfortune of the modern age did not seem to dissipate itself. What followed in the trail of this general failure was the pretentious claim that indisputable certainty as an article of faith was but a classical or medieval myth. The late modern found nothing so fruitful as a systematic effort to restore rational thinking by a scrupulous denial of absolute certainty. Perhaps some of the desperate thinkers of this school had the proverbial grace to leave the only criterion of truth and thought to the exclusive care of the esoteric world, which to them was as innocuous as it was effete and mythological.

And this deliberate stand against the only test or criterion of reason was foreshadowed by a vigorous speculation, whose main object was to side-track or undermine the ontological enquiry by making the epistemological its *conditio sine qua non*. It was claimed with great vigour that what counted as essential and necessary in philosophic enquiry, if truth was to be its main objective, was a preliminary enquiry into the nature of the technique of discovery rather than the nature

of reality or truth. We must find out first if we have any right or capacity to know the objective world before we begin really to know it. As if this scrupulously honest attempt to make sure about the right or capacity to know was not in itself an instance of pure knowing.

And yet modern philosophy which had to its credit so much genuine criticism of the classical and medieval could have been spared the unnecessary waste of attack on truth and metaphysical enquiry if Descartes, by sheer irony, had not misled it by the confusion he had made between the two minds. It was that initial blunder at the dawn of modern philosophy that was truly responsible for this heroic waste of our modern or contemporary men. It had the unwholesome effect of keeping all sensitive minds from undertaking on their own a rediscovery of the starting-point with indisputable certainty—a step that was essential and necessary for all legitimate enquiry. In so far as they unwittingly accepted the Cartesian claim about the indisputable certainty of the human mind, they came to be disillusioned sooner or later about both indisputable certainty and metaphysical truth. This disillusionment must have come to them as a result of their failure to utilize the contents of the human mind for the purpose of building up an unquestionable edifice of truth. When the empiricists, for instance, clashed with the rationalists with regard to the respective claims of sense-content and concept, when the Kantian clashed with the post-Kantian with reference to the nature and capacity of mind and the meaning and value of knowledge, how could the intellectual world escape the sense of disillusionment about indisputable certainty and metaphysical truth?

And yet if the trouble did arise in the speculative world, the source and secret of that trouble is not traceable to the systematic attempts of modern thought to utilize the contents of mind or the mind itself for building up systems of philosophy. There was nothing wrong with that perfectly legitimate procedure of analysing the contents of mind. If the

mind was an indisputable certainty, there was no reason why its contents should not have been taken as indisputably valid. But the mind was not an indisputable certainty; it was just an ordinary fact of immediate consciousness, which we cannot deny altogether, but which is by no means immune from contradiction. Naturally, its contents appear to be in conflict with one another. The failure of modern philosophy lay incipiently in the confusion which Descartes made between the two minds.

Still it was not necessary that attempts should have been made to discredit either metaphysical enquiry or ontological truth. If Descartes had been unwittingly the cause of the failure of modern philosophy, he had equally shown the way in which metaphysical enquiry should or could have been carried out. The mode of systematic doubting was a landmark in speculative history; it was perhaps the only true sign by which we could distinguish the ancient from the modern thought and not merely as a matter of chronological accuracy. If the moderns had been truly more earnest about their mission, they might have chosen the Cartesian mode of thought rather than the mistaken conclusion of Descartes. The historian is bound to comment adversely on the failure of the modern philosophers to detect the confusion that Descartes made, especially as there was in Descartes a positive evidence about indisputable certainty. It is difficult to decide whether it was Descartes' inadvertent confusion between the two minds that was responsible for the failure of modern philosophy or the modern philosophers' clear and unfortunate failure to detect that confusion. And the case for the modern philosophers certainly weakens when we discover that they had no grounds whatsoever for discrediting the ontological truth, or superseding the ontological by the empirical enquiry. It is one thing to claim that we have not so far produced sufficient evidence for indisputable certainty or ontological enquiry, quite a different thing to uphold the "probable" as the certain, or the necessity of the episte-

mological enquiry as a preliminary to the ontological. There is no reason why we should not keep in mind that it is with the ontological truth and indisputable certainty that the chances for success of any human endeavour wholly lie. For the rest we can but play with probability or unsteady fortune.

This is not the stage, however, where we can profitably discuss either the doctrine of probability or preparatory epistemology. Both of them require elaborate analysis; especially the doctrine of probability, which can be dealt with only after the doctrine of truth has been definitely laid down. What we can do, meanwhile, is just to say a word or two about the priority of the epistemological claim, especially as this claim has been put forward as the one distinguishing feature of modern philosophy.

It has been asserted with conviction that the characteristic contribution of the modern mind lay in discovering the limit of human understanding, or knowledge as such, before undertaking any ontological enquiry. The implication was that if the ancients or the scholastics failed to solve the problems of thought, one of the main causes of that failure was their pitiful inability to detect the priority of the epistemological analysis. In so far as they did not ask the simple questions—how much can we know, what is the limit of our understanding—for them the occasion never arose when they could distinguish between true and false knowledge. As a matter of fact, the "limit" was exceeded by them invariably, in spite of strenuous enquiry. And at least one great philosopher might be supposed seriously to have meant that the fault of all philosophic enquiry lay in not distinguishing between knowledge and Reality. It was the time-worn philosophic habit of confusing knowledge or phenomena with Reality or Noumenon that led in the end to the inevitable antinomies of thought. What was most essential, therefore, was that this unholy association should be broken up and philosophic enquiry should be strictly confined to the four walls of knowledge, pure and simple.

It is not possible that we should discuss Kant's claim or his theory of knowledge before we have formulated our own theory of knowledge. The most that we can do is to discuss briefly the Lockian claim to the effect that we should analyse the nature of mind and its limited capacity before asking the question about the nature of Reality. We can, at least, discuss two simple issues about it:

(*a*) Why did Locke raise the question and how did he come to suggest it?
(*b*) If it happened to be raised under perfectly legitimate conditions, could the claim have been justified by evidence?

The conditions under which Locke came to make the epistemological suggestion may easily be found in the simple event of the Cartesian discovery of mind. If Locke suggested that we should make an enquiry into the nature of mind, one of the causes legitimately might have been that there was at least the mind with which we could deal. Descartes was supposed to have established the existence and reality of mind with indisputable certainty. And Descartes himself led the way in that enquiry, in so far as he started analysing the idea of perfection which, after all, was a content of mind. And there seems to be no reason why one might not contend that Locke's suggestion would not have seen the light of day if Descartes had not convinced everybody about the indisputable validity and reality of mind. In so far as mind was the only thing which survived as real in the sea of uncertainty, it was the only subject matter concerning which one could legitimately make enquiries. To deal with mind was not to deal with a figment of the brain or with something which was just probable, or only immediately known or a mere religious hypothesis.

And if, further, the Lockian enquiry into the nature of mind took the epistemological form, the Cartesian position would easily offer an explanation for that fact as well. It is

well known that it was no part of Descartes' contention to maintain that the mind that he proved to be indisputably real was unlimited. On the contrary, the fact of its being limited was the chief reason which led Descartes to conclude that the idea of perfection could not have been created by the mind. There is no reason, therefore, why Locke should not have developed what was to begin with an enquiry into the nature of mind into an enquiry into the nature of its limit. He had at least the full and clear authority of Descartes to support him in his procedure.

Besides, if the mind is limited, and if the fact of its being limited was at the root of all our failure to get hold of the truth and to know reality without any mistake, an enquiry into the limit of human understanding must in any case be regarded as indispensable. If the mistakes that we commit are to be traced to the fact that we exceed the limit of our understanding, it becomes incumbent on all philosophers to find out, if possible, what that limit is. The implication obviously is that once that limit has been discovered, it ought to be easy for all of us not to supersede it, i.e. easy for both the philosophers and the lay folk to avoid mistakes.

But could Locke seriously claim that the ontological enquiry can in any case be truly postponed till the epistemological has been conscientiously gone through? How did he himself, for instance, start his own enquiry? Did he not start it as an enquiry into the constituents of human experience? And could he possibly have done so if Descartes had not already established for him the reality of the mind or human experience? The point to note is that Locke's enquiry could start only after Descartes had actually completed an ontological enquiry for Locke in the shape of discovering the reality of mind. It was the ontological enquiry that preceded the epistemological in Locke's case and not the other way about. Besides, if we have a mind, as a matter of fact, to deal with, we can ask the question how and in what way it was limited. But can we expect to deal with

such a mind unless we have taken pains to prove its existence?

But a much more serious difficulty arises as to the possibility of discovering the limit of the understanding, in the sense or to an extent that it might help us to escape the mistakes we have hitherto committed. If we start with the assumption that the human mind is limited, we have to reckon with the fact that the human mind also exceeds the limit because it is limited. The idea of that limit necessarily implies both the senses of limitation. So that whatever the adequacy or accuracy of the enquiry into the nature of the limit might be, it was bound to expose both the facts about limit as inevitable. If we succeed at all in discovering the limit we shall succeed equally in discovering that we cannot help exceeding the limit. So that if, as an enquiry, it might turn out to be complete and perfect, it need not be assumed that it would end in giving us the chances of achieving our purpose or escaping the mistakes.

And after that, the only chance of improving our prospects will lie in the deliberate assumption that we philosophers possess not only the capacity to make enquiries, the object of which is sheer discovery, but possess also the capacity to generate changes and create situations, in whatever form and whenever we like. We have to believe that the human mind with which we work not only knows and makes discoveries but also is an eminently creative or generative principle.

But could we believe in such a possibility, however desirable, when our main creed happens to be that the mind is limited? Did Locke seriously imply that the human mind could be developed into an unlimited mind? The fact is that the question of creation does not arise with anything limited, whether it is mind or matter, since it is the limited and determinate entity that alone illustrates the reign of law. Limitation is another name for necessity and determination, as we are so authoritatively assured by tradition.

Obviously there was no chance for Locke to escape the consequences of limitation, once he started with the belief that the mind was limited.

The case against Locke seems to be so apparent that it did not take his critics long to point out its deficiencies. It has been pointed out that if the mind is suspected to be limited in its capacity to know, it is, *ipso facto*, debarred from discovering its limitation. If the limitation is to be taken as a fact, it could be detected only by an unerring or unlimited mind. The limited mind may not be even aware of its limitation, though conceivably it may be aware of everything else. As a philosopher put it, you have to cross the boundary or limit of experience to discover that there was a boundary or limit. The frog in the well, as the Indian proverb has it, never could trust the fish that somehow got into his well, that there was a sea which exceeded the limit of the well. As a matter of fact, one could justify such a claim only by pseudo-logical arguments to the effect that the wise men of the speculative world should emulate the example of the craftsmen who test their tools before actually working with them. Finally there can be nothing intelligible in the hidden implication of the epistemological claim that the limited mind has a lucid interval just when it is trying to discover its limitation.

But we do not for a moment suggest that there might not be deep-lying issues behind the claim which Locke made, so far as it bore on the question of regulating our knowledge. Locke evidently believed, like so many others, that if mistakes are committed they need not be committed. There is nothing inevitable about them. And to him, the Socratic dictum "Know thyself" may have sounded true. There is always an explanation of the origin of the mistakes; and the conditions which are responsible for them may mean nothing more serious than what is called ignorance or want of sufficient experience. It is our ignorance that causes them; and if we do possess a mind which can know we need not

believe that it must be necessarily deficient. At any rate Socrates did not hold that ignorance or deficiency of knowledge had its grades, so that knowledge and ignorance formed between them alternative stages of human experience.

This is not the place to discuss the Socratic doctrine. But even if we do not associate Locke's claim with it, we may still have to hold that Locke implied some form or other of human control inside the limit of human experience. He was prepared to sacrifice a good deal of knowledge as falling outside the human range. But he was not prepared to sacrifice his freedom or control within the limit that was retained. However crudely he might have put it, what he meant was that the human mind, up to a point and within specified range, was not only capable of knowing the truth but equally capable of restraining itself from exceeding the limit or trying to know what it was not supposed to know. In other words, it had within that limit both the creative and the cognitive capacity.

Whether such freedom and the creative capacity which it implies is consistent with the idea of limit may be left as a difficulty. Evidently it is not consistent. The talk about limited freedom is fairly old, and it has not improved its quality considerably even by recent attempts to replenish it with fresh strength.

But one might just for a moment point out that behind all claims for freedom, whether absolute or relative, there is the lurking but consuming assumption that the Negative, which is the source of all determination, and necessarily of mistakes and failures, need not be recognized as vital or valid. Whether we take the profound philosophic attempts either to rule it out as illusion or to work it into the main stream of reality as a moment which stages the contradiction, or the more modest attempts to recognize its sway only over specified regions, such as Noumenon or the spiritual or supernatural realities, the same reluctance to recognize the Negative is noticed. It pervades the scientific regions just as

much as the fields of life where men and women resolutely try to work out their social values. It is not at all necessary, therefore, that one should dismiss Locke's attempt to keep knowledge within the bounds as naïve and altogether meaningless. If it suffers from difficulties, as it certainly does, it does so along with other theories which have by way of opposition to it suggested that we should humbly submit to things as they are and never try to change them.

But it does not follow that Locke or any other philosopher should have missed the legitimate place of the epistemological enquiry in relation to the ontological. It was a clear mistake and not merely an oversight on their part—from which modern philosophy has steadily suffered—to emphasize the value and need of the epistemological enquiry in a way which could not but depress the significance and value of the ontological. It may well be that Locke's chief point was that the interest of the ontological enquiry could be safeguarded, if only the epistemological enquiry had removed the possibility of mistake. But it will be difficult to make out that Locke fully appreciated the value and significance of the ontological enquiry. It will be difficult to maintain that Locke believed that whether we can find out about the nature of mind and the limit of our capacity to know, depended entirely on the success of a preliminary ontological enquiry. He must have failed altogether to note that we have to prove the nature of Reality for the establishment of the mind as a fact before we could undertake the enquiry into the nature of mind or into any possible limit to its capacity to know. It did not strike him that such a proof implied an advanced state of the ontological enquiry precisely because the human mind, which has to be analysed as a very specialized feature of Reality, does not exist except in a setting of what we call the spatio-temporal universe.

Like the Lockian claim about the epistemological enquiry, an analogous mistake was committed by those who believed that we could dispense with "indisputable certainty" and

deal only with "probability"; this was the second unfortunate consequence of the Cartesian mistake. Our philosophers who discarded indisputable certainty forgot that probability was a very specialized form of truth, if it should be called truth at all. It could not naturally be dealt with if we had not made sure already about the universe where facts and judgements appeared. To suggest that we should be satisfied with the probable may have a sense in so far as the probable is a specialized feature of human experience. But it is only those who had indisputable experience about the world of thought generally who could cultivate the art of dealing with probability. For one thing, the probable is not supposed to contradict the certain; because we are certain about so much, we can afford to be content only with the probable about the rest. The probable, again, can never exist except with the background of the certain. If the probable is only a degree of certainty, it can by no means be taken as uncertain and false. The best that could be said about it is that it is the partial and incomplete certainty, if that has any meaning. Besides, as everybody knows, the conclusion which is probable is indisputably certain in the sense that it excludes all other alternatives at the moment. There was no reason whatsoever why the advocates of probability should have put it forward as an alternative to certainty.

Still, the direct and indirect results of these two doctrines (probability, priority of epistemology), which depreciated the value of "indisputable certainty" or "ontological enquiry," would not have made a great difference to modern thought if the metaphysical efforts since Descartes had yielded some consistent and comprehensive account of reality. If, somehow, these extremely intelligent efforts had succeeded in bearing fruit, the ontological enquiry and indisputable truth would have swept away the dam which those mistaken doctrines sought hard to put in their path. But none of these efforts succeeded any better than the ancient and scholastic attempts at solving the problems of

thought. The most that could be said about their achievements is that the intellectual world has been offered, as a result of it, a much clearer analysis of the concepts and categories than that it inherited from the ancients or the medievals. And at least two new methods came to be discovered: (*a*) the critical method of Kant; (*b*) the dialectic method of the Post-Kantians. It would be a stupid mistake if anyone tried to minimize their profound significance. Besides, it is also a fact that the deductive and the experimental methods came to be developed in the course of the modern enquiry to a considerable extent. We shall have plenty of time to compare these methods and assess their full value after we have laid down our own.

But neither the more mature analysis nor the highly efficient methods of the modern philosophers was sufficient for the purpose of solving the problems of thought. And it might be easily pointed out that what truly vitiated the attempts of these methods to discover the nature of reality was that none of these had a starting-point that was indisputably certain. They all innocently ran on the assumption that Descartes had, once and for all, established the indisputable certainty of mind and human experience. All of them without exception dealt either with the mind or with its content. As we have already shown, sense experience, concepts or judgements were selected by the empiricists, rationalists, and Kant respectively, as the chief subject-matter for analysis, deduction, and criticism. And if the post-Kantians varied the process of enquiry after Kantian thought drew a sharp line of cleavage between the phenomenal and noumenal Reality and chose to deal with mind and reason or spirit, they too, it may be claimed, started with Descartes' assumption. There was no evidence other than what immediate consciousness gives us about either the contents of mind or the mind itself. The whole of their metaphysical procedure, it may be taken for granted, started on a dogmatic basis, and naturally did not succeed any

better than the ancient or the medieval procedure. The mischief, therefore, that arose from the mistaken principles of probability and epistemology was not counteracted. Those who did not swear by the ontological enquiry or indisputable certainty went on preaching hard against them; so that to-day, as we have pointed out in the beginning of our enquiry, we have a strong opinion holding that the output of philosophic effort is but confusion of thought.

And if all that we have been trying to suggest about modern philosophic contribution be at all true, it is impossible not to trace this obvious failure to the initial misfortune that overtook Descartes' conclusion. There are two things which can be rightly said about the French contribution, in so far as it initiated modern speculation:

(1) For the first time in the course of philosophic speculation it tried to put the case of the absolute sceptic as fairly as possible and then orientated from the heart of scepticism itself the clue to Reality.
(2) And it is equally a fact that by sheer irony of fortune it failed to draw the conclusion from the technique of doubting, and suffered inevitably from a confusion of thought.

We do not see how the initiation of modern speculation in Europe could be more truly characterized. We are convinced that the Cartesian technique of doubting implied immense possibilities. If by any chance it had been properly handled it might have given rise to a philosophy altogether different from any that was known at the time or that came to be developed after Descartes.

And it is here that the modern mind might justly claim that the ancient and scholastic philosophy was completely left behind. The fact is that no period of ancient philosophy took the sceptic, or the Negative that was his stock-in-trade, so seriously as Descartes did. Scepticism, which fattened itself on the illusions of sense-experience and the contradictions of thought, was both discovered and matured by the

philosophers of the classical age. And it is well known how precisely the sceptic's claim was put, and that in an extremely accentuated form. The claim that there is no Reality, and if there is Reality there is no knowledge, and if there are Reality and knowledge there is no communication, sounded almost like the doom announcing the last stage of annihilation. But all this was really and truly play-acting. The sceptic was taken seriously in so far as he made a case against sense-experience and even judgements about the objective world. And the total effect of the sceptical claim on philosophic temper and thought was nothing more serious than acceptance by the philosopher of the need of restraint, both in thought and practice. It acted against hasty judgement and thoughtless practices; and invariably drove the philosopher to take account of the inner spirit or world much more than of the outer. Scepticism served as a cathartic, almost as a moral influence, which made of prudence a virtue and established the customs and tradition on a much firmer basis than ever before.

Compared with this, the Cartesian scepticism was obviously much more strict and severe. Even the geometrical truths which served as the sheet-anchor of knowledge did not escape the rigour of the sceptic's charge. And it was by no means play-acting when Descartes proceeded to face the consequences of systematic doubting.

It is difficult not to feel that Descartes deliberately took the sceptical plunge as that was the only honest alternative left to him. Descartes, unlike any of his predecessors, must have known what the anguish of doubt meant, or how one who was in its throes could not but feel what even annihilation signified. Perhaps there was another figure in European history who had the same experience as Descartes had. It would be an interesting study to find out what would have happened to Descartes and Kant if they had not discovered that doubt, at least, survived in the last analysis, or that mind was the creator of its own experience.

And the main point that comes clearly out of the Cartesian and Kantian attitude to scepticism is, that one has to answer the sceptic before one can proceed legitimately to build up thought and establish practice. Neither tradition nor custom, much less the accumulated theories of the universe could be depended upon, so long as the sceptic's charge was there, still grimly outstanding. Perhaps both Descartes and Kant might have felt that human mind had not succeeded, so far, in forming the correct judgement about the Negative; that failure to think consistently and frustration of purposes were writ large on the face of human history as an evidence of the mysterious presence of the Negative. They might have felt too that nobody in human history was wise enough to tell us if the crack of doom which might involve every vestige of Reality was there if only as a nightmare.

And it was here in this serious valuation of the sceptical claim that the modern mind differed from the ancient or the scholastic. And Descartes, as he initiated the modern technique of systematic doubting, frankly stood at the head of modern thought.

But as luck would have it, he missed the conclusion of that systematic doubting altogether, and became responsible for another systematic failure to account for the facts of experience. Whether such a consequence was consistent with the spirit or nature of the Reality which Descartes was trying to discover is by no means an idle question. We are convinced that it was. But that does not prove that the Cartesian responsibility was not a fact or that the failure of modern philosophy was a fiction. Perhaps we shall discover that fictions or myths have somehow a place in the scheme of things—we can neither repudiate them nor wish that they had never been. But if fictions are valid so also must be facts; and the main issue now before us is, whether we can discover some additional facts about Reality during the closing years of the modern age.

In other words, might it not be possible for us to revive

the true Cartesian claim, and find out if we could get from it some clue about Reality as a fact? We propose to go back to the point in Cartesian thought before the confusion took place, and deal with that logical possibility which conceivably resulted from systematic doubting.

CHAPTER III

THE THEORY OF DOUBT

Descartes' theory of doubt—an instance of doubt is not an instance of bare contradiction—difference between the two instances—doubt is alternative or mutual contradiction—Ass of Buridan and the fox in the glade—alternatives imply a common background which does not enter into the conflict—comparison of bare and mutual contradiction—the major European philosophers confirm this theory of doubt?

It might be useful to recapitulate the theory of doubt which Descartes must have presupposed in his critical investigation before we actually engage in the critical or constructive enquiry.

The theory of doubt which we found as an implication of the Cartesian technique implied that an instance of doubt is not an instance of bare contradiction. If one proposition, for instance, contradicts another, what follows as a consequence is not doubt but a belief in one of the propositions in place of the belief in the other. Doubt is not mere or bare negation which must necessarily lead in the end to some affirmation or other.

If, for instance, as a result of perpetual negation or contradiction, we go on losing belief after belief, it does not follow that we are sure to be reduced, in the end, to a state of suspense or doubt or nothing. On the contrary, it is to be expected that a perpetual contradiction will result in the discovery of the completest truth or reality. In other words, it is the positive or the affirmative in its perfect and most complete form that is sure to prevail.

It does not, however, follow that contradiction cannot in the nature of things play a part in doubt at all. It certainly does, precisely because doubt is not an instance of affirming or positing a truth. When we are in doubt, it is

obvious that we are not at all in a position to affirm or posit anything.

But the contradiction that plays a part in doubt is altogether different from what we have called bare contradiction. The case of bare contradiction is a case where one proposition contradicts another without being contradicted in its turn; the contradiction is one-sided. Exactly the reverse is the case in the form of contradiction which appears in doubt. It is both-sided and mutual. The propositions or truths which do actually create doubt are alternatives, in so far as they mutually contradict one another. In other words, you can make as good or bad a case in favour of or against the one as in favour of or against the other. The term "incompatible" has been universally used for them—and the point to note is that they mutually destroy each other. So that if the alternative terms and propositions which mutually contradicted one another were all that of necessity should exist for creating an instance of doubt, the absolute Negative would have resulted as the only conclusion of doubt.

There are two celebrated fables in philosophical literature which could be suggested as picturesque symbols of doubt:

(1) The case of the Ass of Buridan which died of starvation because it could not choose between two stacks of hay so evenly made up.
(2) The case of the fox in the glade who saw to his intense horror that two snakes, catching one another by the tail, completely swallowed up one another.

The symbols are very significant, and doubt, if it is really genuine, does not end with oscillations between the one view and the other which invariably result in a choice. The oscillation at a certain stage definitely comes to a close, and the views in question reappear in a state where further oscillations are not possible. What is possible after that is mutual extinction.

But propositions and terms in the nature of things cannot come into mutual contradiction unless they literally imply a common background or presupposition. The characteristic

feature of a state of alternatives, strictly speaking, is that there must be a consistency as their common root. Alternatives or mutually contradictory terms are inconceivable without some positive ground or belief, which they must both equally imply. The only alternative situation conceivable to this is that they may be absolute differents which do not and cannot imply any such background. In other words, it is the complete absence of relationship between terms and propositions that could secure for them immunity from a common presupposition. But such a contingency, if it is conceivable, was bound equally to despoil them of their alternative character. Mutual contradiction is an instance of definite relationship; it cannot appear between terms which are absolute differents—alternatives cannot afford to release themselves from the necessity of a common background.

It does not however follow that this theory of doubt, however indisputable, should not raise complicated issues. For one thing, the relationship between the common background and the alternative is a very pertinent issue as it is bound up with the Law of Contradiction, and there may be other issues which are equally pertinent and inevitable.

But this is not the stage where we can engage in a discussion of the outlying issues.

What we can do is to add that the presupposition in question does not enter into the vortex of the conflict and therefore does not have to undergo the process of destruction. On the contrary, doubt, even if it is supposed to take the most sweeping and comprehensive of forms, need not denude reality of all its contents. At least the minimum reality—the most elementary form of being—is bound to survive. And to emphasize this simple or elementary truth, it may be interesting to draw a comparison between the completest form of mutual contradiction and the most perfect instance of bare contradiction. The difference between them as a result of that comparison is bound to be enormous. While in the case of bare contradiction the ultimate result must

necessarily be the completest form of reality of Being, in the case of mutual contradiction the final survival will as a matter of course be the most elementary form of Being, which is tantamount to nothing.

If, however, we cannot discuss the outlying issues, we can at least find out if the well-known practices of the major philosophers of European history would confirm this rather unusual conception of doubt. Such a comparison is bound to be helpful even if it may not be altogether necessary. If we do find that this theory, whatever its strangeness, was explicitly or implicitly held, not only by the empiricists and rationalists but also by such major philosophers as Kant and Hegel, such a discovery would decidedly be an argument in its favour. We shall start with an analysis of the empiricist's position.

The empiricist of philosophic tradition is fully convinced that it is the particular and not the universal that could be reasonably taken to have certainty and truth. Proverbially it is difficult to shake his confidence. Whether he meant indisputable certainty or absolute truth is not the point at issue; but there can be no doubt that the universals were actually found by him to be not only less certain and true but to be practically nominal in their significance. It is also well known that the theory of immediate consciousness and its variant known as "verification" played a very large part in this school of philosophy, frankly to serve the purpose of evidence or a test of truth. Nowhere else would one come across so vigorous an attempt to defend the claim of the particular, and it is altogether a different story whether all the evidence which the empiricist hitherto adduced in support of this position proved to be sufficient and sound. They might or might not have been. But the point that we are interested in with regard to the empirical claim is whether it could be supported by fresh evidence on the basis of the theory of doubt which we have just laid down. It seems to us that it should be perfectly possible to show that the empiricists

might have come to the historic conclusion about the particular on the ground that the universals were always found to be in mutual contradiction. It might easily be argued on their behalf that if we have to believe that we run into contradictions in our attempt to characterize the particular, the universals which constitute the characterization cannot possibly be taken as consistent and certain.

If, for instance, we assume for the sake of argument,

(*a*) the well-known theory of predication or characterization;
(*b*) the claim that the categories and universals have been found to contradict one another,

it can be argued with perfect reason that the empiricist's claim was the only defensible position.

It ought not to be difficult to show that if universals are in a state of mutual contradiction, no characterization of Reality can possibly avoid a counter-characterization, for the simple reason that in each case it must be constituted by universals. Characterizations by their very nature must stand in a relation of mutual contrariety.

But as characterization, by definition, must imply something which is to be characterized, that something cannot be supposed to enter into the vortex of the conflict where the contrary characters are necessarily involved. That something was bound to preserve its integrity or stability as a background. It would be impossible otherwise to account for the fact of the conflict between the characterizations. The characterizations must necessarily imply that common background to escape the fate of being reduced to the state of absolute differents. And it is inconceivable that either of them should drag that common background into the conflict.

Could we not then distinguish the background or presupposition of the characterizations from the universals which constitute the characterization? And if there is no

reason why we should not, does it not follow that we should call that background "particular," as between the particular and the universal there seems to be no other position which can be called mediate or legitimate. It seems to be perfectly correct to claim that the empiricist's position about the validity of the particular may be fully established if the theories about the particular and conflict between universals are accepted. And that assumption would guarantee a perfect illustration of the analysis we have given of doubt.

An exactly similar illustration could be guaranteed from the rationalist's position even though it honestly and wholeheartedly professed the opposite claim: the indubitable certainty and priority of the concepts and universals. It seems to us to be perfectly possible to argue that the rationalists might have come to the conclusion that it was only the concept or universal that was certain and true, on the ground that if conflicts arose at all, they must have arisen between the particular instances of them.

If we assume, for the sake of argument,

(*a*) the theory that claims the reality of concept or class and reduces the rest of experience to instances of that class;

(*b*) the claim that the instances of the class which are supposed to be particulars must embody and represent all the conflict that there is,

we can with every reason argue that the rationalists were fully justified in claiming the priority and validity of the concept. The concept in their case will serve as the common background or presupposition of the particular instances which are supposed to be necessarily in conflict. So that it is the concept alone that would follow as the indisputable truth, when evidently the particulars happened to be heavily overcast with doubt by reason of their mutual opposition. And it is a fact that the particular did come to be looked

upon in the rationalist school with the same suspicion as the concept in the empirical school. If the particulars were regarded by the rationalists as illusory, the concepts were regarded by the empiricists as nominal. And there is no reason why this interpretation should not be taken as sound.

Like the empiricist and the rationalist, Immanuel Kant, too, who essayed earnestly to bring about peace between the rationalists and the empiricists, may on a close analysis be equally found to have implied the same theory of doubt. It is well known that Kant, like many others both before and after him, found that there was a real conflict between the particular and the universal. To be precise, neither of the two theories—classification and characterization—could be of any help to us to discover the indisputable certainty of truth. It was disputable if the particular or the category, by itself, could be taken as the truth to the exclusion of the other. On the contrary, if anything can be taken as the truth, it must be experience or synthetic judgement which somehow embodies them both, and nothing more nor less than that judgement. We need not go into the nature and constitution of the main assumption or starting-point of Kant which he is supposed to have derived from three different sources:

(*a*) physical science,
(*b*) mathematics,
(*c*) intuition.

Nor need we discuss the method with which Kant so magnificently developed the structure of his great *Critique*—the method of criticism. We have our own suggestions to make on the Kantian position which has to be postponed till we come to an elaborate treatment of Kant.

But there may easily be another way of accounting for Kant's discovery of truth in addition to the one of our celebrated scholars; and that way consists in the simple enquiry whether Kant, consciously or unconsciously, arrived at his unity of apperception by looking for the common

background of the conflict between the particular and the universal. If we can assume that there was truly a conflict between the particular and the universal, according to Kant, and also assume that Kant somehow believed that the conflict between the particular and the universal, being mutual, was bound to imply a common background, the necessity of the unity of apperception was bound to follow. Kant would be perfectly justified in holding that the unity of apperception was bound to follow as a background if the conflict between the particular and the universal had to be taken as an absolute fact. To us, this is a perfectly straightforward explanation of the Kantian claim.

But this does not commit us to the view that by discovering the common background of the conflict between the particular and the universal, Kant solved the problem of conflict altogether. And if Kant failed to carry conviction with his claim about the solution of conflict, as such, the reason for that was to be found, not in his failure to establish apperception in relation to the conflict between the particular and the universal—he did not fail—but in his acceptance without criticism of the Cartesian position, or the position of mathematics and physical science. Somehow Kant missed the fact that there were deeper conflicts than the conflict between the particular and the universal to account for. Besides, Kant did not go into the question of experience as a whole as Descartes did. But all that need not imply that our theory of doubt is not illustrated in the philosophy of Kant as well.

And it might be equally claimed that Hegelian philosophy too implied this theory just as the Kantian and the other systems seem to have done. As is well known, the notion of contradiction came to find nothing short of a metaphysical status in Hegel's philosophy; perhaps no other philosopher was so honestly willing as Hegel was to recognize its objective value. Hegel at any rate felt that the Negative could not be done away with as waste or accident or literal nothing.

But contradiction as a fact never had an independent origin or status in Hegel's opinion. It was created by the reason or by the spirit. In other words, it had not only a background or presupposition but was also followed by a synthesis or unity, as Hegel called it.

CHAPTER IV

THE RESIDUUM OF UNIVERSAL DOUBT

Analysis of the technique of doubt—its full implication not realized by Descartes—traceable to the laws of thought—mind and not human mind can be deduced as a residuum of universal doubt—provisional definition of mind.

OUR review of the major systems of philosophy in relation to the theory of doubt has been frankly rather brief. Our aim in the main has been only to suggest a fresh line of investigation. If this suggestion is followed up by elaborate analysis, the particular theory of doubt that we have laid down may appear to have been the universal assumption of the whole of our philosophic history. We hold that if the different systems of philosophy did actually clash one with another on their fundamental principles and categories, there must have been at least some agreement among them. They must all have agreed, in spite of their disagreements, as to the validity of the idea that doubt was nothing but alternatives with a presupposition. Besides, this agreement was, in the nature of things bound up with their faith in the laws of thought. The connection between the notion of alternatives and the laws of thought is as real as it is essential, as we shall soon have occasion to discuss.

But we do not mean that this agreement was in fact either formally or openly declared by all, or became even fully self-conscious in every system of thought. What we do suggest is that the agreement was literally there, giving as full a support to the main position of every one of the systems as possible. And it might well be that the modern philosophers borrowed this extremely responsible truth from Descartes himself, in whose philosophy it lay as an obvious implication. Besides, they must have done so in the same spirit as that in which they accepted as a basis of their own enquiries,

his "*cogito ergo sum.*" It follows that in more senses than one, the French philosopher Descartes must have laid the foundation of modern thought:

(*a*) with regard to the indubitable source where it had to go for the subject-matter of its enquiry—human experience with its contents;
(*b*) with regard to the mode of investigation; to trace the background or presumption of the conflict of ideas and thoughts as the only source of indisputable truth.

Unfortunately, the result of their strenuous and earnest labour did not produce as great a result as might have been expected. As Descartes most unfortunately failed to profit by his own method, so they, too, failed to utilize the Cartesian technique in a truly productive manner. And it might be interesting to find out if this very original method may still be utilized to any better purpose. At least such an attempt will be the starting-point of our own enquiry, and the immediate question that we shall raise is, what exactly was the residuum that ought to have resulted from the process of systematic doubt, which Descartes contemplated but never carried out? Could such a process, even if it is conceivable, be carried out in practice at all? Could the residuum conceivably have been human mind as Descartes thought it was? And if Descartes was mistaken in thinking that it was the human mind, what mind if not human mind could it have been? Could it, again, have been "mind" at all?

We have already argued on behalf of Descartes that the residuum could conceivably be called a mind, and the reason we suggested was that mind was the only conceivable residuum of a process of doubt which necessarily dealt with human experience. If doubt could be applied to human experience and human experience only, each instance of it, e.g. each instance of alternative percepts, images and concepts was bound to imply as their background and presupposition what we call "mind." Whatever the

contents of human experience might be, whether they were cognitive, conative or affective, a relation of contrariety among them was bound to imply as its presupposition something which can only be called by the name of "mind."

But we do not thereby commit ourselves to any theory of human experience or mind. Our argument here runs entirely on the basis of the Cartesian assumptions. The point that we are making on behalf of Descartes is that if human experience is supposed to be constituted by contents which are somehow held together by mind, no amount of depletion of those contents can lead to a disappearance of that mind. If, for instance, the contents disappear as a result of being reduced to alternatives by the method of doubt, there will always be a background left over; and if it is to be supposed that the contents, instead of lying as absolute differents were held together by mind, what could serve as the surviving background if it was not that mind?

We do not touch here the assumption of Descartes that human experience was some form of system over which mind presides, as the connecting principle. We leave well alone the controversy between the idealists and the materialists, or that between those who affirm that mind is something quite distinct from its object and contents and those who had the courage to deny it altogether. Recent thought, too, that consciousness was a phantom of the human brain we shall leave for future discussion. It will serve our purpose better if we come back to an elaborate analysis of all those controversial issues about mind and human experience after we have laid down our theory of knowledge, which may not be similar to any of the known existing theories.

But let it be understood in the meantime that we are only trying to advance a claim on behalf of Descartes to the effect that, if what he claimed as the notion of human experience be true, even the most systematic form of doubting might be expected to leave over "mind" as the ultimate background of the last instance of doubt. There

can be no question of losing our "mind" too, as we might conceivably lose the contents of mind by reason of their being reduced to alternatives.

But the question may be raised whether the survival of mind would necessarily mean the survival of something which was indisputably and unquestionably true. It is one thing to claim that the mind will survive even though all the contents have disappeared; it is a different thing to suggest that it will survive for good and all. The question of indisputable certainty is not a question of mere survival. The fact that mind was bound to survive as a background, even though all its contents had been lost need not prove that the mind was an absolute survival. Its absoluteness could be claimed only if its contents could be shown to have embodied or represented the whole of Reality. If the survival of mind meant a survival after every conceivable form of reality had been questioned and lost, there would and could be no occasion for disputing the claim of the mind. The question, therefore, that arises is, was Descartes of the opinion that the contents of mind did represent the whole of reality in some sense or other?

We are not exactly in a position to state whether Descartes did actually hold that the contents of mind and human experience represented the whole of Reality. We have no such Cartesian scholarship as to be able to decide on textual issues. It is for a Cartesian scholar to decide this simple issue, and we have no doubt it can be easily done.

But Descartes certainly did mean to get at absolute certainty above everything. Obviously his point was not merely to analyse human experience with a view to find out where that analysis led him, irrespective of any end or goal. If he analysed human experience, he did so for two clear reasons:

(1) There was nothing else with which we can deal.
(2) The only way of getting at absolute certainty or Reality consisted in doubting experience systematically.

He seemed to be positive about the value of such an analysis so far as the question of indisputable certainty or absolute truth was concerned. Descartes, if anything, was earnestly after the discovery of truth or Reality which was absolutely immune from doubt.

But could Descartes legitimately expect to arrive at absolute certainty from the sceptical analysis of human experience unless he believed that human experience did represent the whole of Reality? Is it conceivable that Descartes should have expected that universal doubt after it had been applied to human experience would yield the final clue if he had no such assumption at the back of his mind?

It may with perfect reason be argued that to Descartes, who had nothing but indisputable truth as his objective, the contents of human experience must have appeared to be comprehensive enough to represent every variety of being and existence. If his claim to have reached indisputable certainty as fact cannot be disputed, the presumption that human experience to him was as inclusive as the universe firmly stands. The implications of his technique guaranteed indisputable certainty just as much as the comprehension or range of human experience.

And the question that arises does not affect the veracity of the residuum as the final result of universal doubt, but precisely the nature and character of that residuum. If it had to be accepted as indisputably true, the question arises, does it follow that it must necessarily be such a complicated thing as human mind? If we do find evidence enough to believe that the residuum was bound to be "mind" as an indisputable conclusion, could we find the same evidence for its human predication?

The issue here is not technical. A textual reference is not necessary to deal with it. What is needed is a straightforward analysis of the technique of doubt which stands to the credit of Descartes. And that analysis means two things;

(*a*) we must find out what it exactly is. Here is a question of fact to decide, as they say in law;

(*b*) and as the technique in the nature of things cannot be applied to the whole field of human experience, we have to surmise or interpret its conceivable results. Here is a question of interpretation.

The issue is that if the technique has a particular feature of its own, and if it is impossible to apply it as it is to the whole field of human experience, could we believe that an interpretation of its conceivable result may indicate human mind rather than bare mind as a residuum?

What then is the feature of the technique?

The technique consists in the simple process of discovering whether a content of human experience has or has not a contrary which disputes its validity. Its object is to find out whether a content happens to be precisely in the relation of contrariety with some other content. Traditionally speaking, the usual practice in all such enquiries is to ask whether the opposite of the content in question is conceivable.

We are referring here to a very ancient practice in the speculative world. And the result of the application of this technique is the disappearance of both the contrary contents, assuming that such contrary contents were found to be either conceivable or facts. Doubt is fatal to any content of human experience if it is applicable to it.

But such a technique obviously cannot be applicable to the whole of human experience. If we can apply it at all, we can apply it only to parts of it or sections of it as we please.

The issue, therefore, what would happen to the whole of experience if the technique of doubt is applied to it, does not arise as a practical issue. We cannot possibly solve it by a method the result of which admits of verification. We can only surmise or interpret its conceivable result. If we want to know whether human mind may result as a residuum from its application we can only do so by interpretation or

surmise. The main point, therefore, is to find out what form this process of interpretation should take.

Did Descartes apply this method of interpretation? Could he have concluded that it was human mind or not mind, as such, that was bound to result as the residuum if he honestly made an effort at that surmise?

We do not think that Descartes' conclusion would have stood for human mind if he had tried to visualize what consequences would result from a possible application of the method of doubting to the whole field of human experience. We feel sure that in so far as he did not make any such effort at intepretation or visualization, he did not realize the disastrous nature of the consequences. His belief that every content may be conceived to have a contrary was by no means sufficient to give him an idea of the nature of the consequences. And we can establish the truth of this suggestion by showing how the method of interpetation or visualization was bound to work.

It is obvious that if the whole field of human experience has to be brought under the direct operation of this technique, "the whole choir of heaven and furniture of earth" has to be unwillingly subjected to it. Not only the physical, biological, and psychical worlds which we are supposed to know but also the esoteric and mystical worlds which we are supposed not to know will naturally fall victims to it. And all these known and unknown worlds, in consequence, will steadily and gradually disappear, as they are sure to stand in the fateful relationship of contrariety to one another.

Let us illustrate this fatal march of the technique of doubt in the variegated worlds of human experience.

We shall begin with the human world and gradually reduce its strictly human contents to a state of contrariety. The result in the end is bound to be a confusion about the whole history of mankind. There will be no experience left which could be described as strictly human and the question will arise whether we could call the background

of the last instance of doubt among the human contents by the name "human." And even if we do call it human, will the mind which has lost all the strictly human contents be the same as the one which has not lost them? Evidently not. The difference in contents means a good deal so far as the nature and identity of mind is concerned. Minds with least contents are supposed to be empty and stand at a considerable distance from minds which are full of contents. Both pathology and normal experiences will bear testimony to the fact that the presence or absence of contents does make a difference to the nature of mind. So that if we still propose to call the background of the last instance of doubt among the strictly human contents, "human mind," it will be an act of courtesy which we pay to logic and precision of thought. The fact is that between the mind which is the residuum after all the strictly human contents have disappeared, and the animal mind, there is not much to choose.

But an equally serious consequence is bound to happen to the animal world when the process of doubting, after it has swallowed up the whole history of the human events, descends upon the strictly animal contents. Gradually all the robust types of animal minds will disappear and the background of the last instance of doubt in the animal world will be practically indistinguishable from a purely vegetable status. And if we just look back to the human experience with which the enquiry began, there will be a considerable distance between the nature or character of mind at that stage and that of the mind at the vegetable stage. It requires very little imagination to guess after this what further calamity would fall on the head of mind if even the vegetable world is eaten into by the blight of doubt. The universe which human experience represented will be broadened out as a purely spatio-temporal stratum or as some radio-active field, to the perpetual delight of our scientists. And the mind which will preside over the destiny

of their scientific heaven will be disowned, even by the smallest vegetable nucleus that ever sprouted on this fertile earth.

And if by any chance a critical French mind had visualized these dire consequences which were bound to follow an application of the technique of doubt to the whole field of human experience, the shock from that disintegration alone would have paralysed any serious plea for the survival of human mind.

But Descartes, for some reason or other did not contemplate these dark vicissitudes, but took the whole technique as perfectly capable of offering him such a clear specimen of robust truth as the mind of a French philosopher. It escaped him altogether that very serious mischief lay in the heart of that technique. He did not realize that it was the most pernicious technique ever devised by human mind if we are resolved to preserve our human status at any cost. Human mind could not survive as a residuum by any chance if the technique were applied to the whole field of human experience.

And it is no good trying to make a defence on its behalf by claiming that doubt is entirely a mental function, a function which only a human mind can discharge. It is no good trying to make a case that doubt cannot exceed the human limit, as undoubtedly it was capable of being practised even by the animal world, not to mention the plant and physical world. There is truth in the suggestion that what we call doubt in the human world is very different from what it might conceivably be in the animal and physical world. In so far as, by assumption, we exclude the animal and the physical existents from the range of percepts, images, and concepts, or the cognitive, affective, and volitional experience, we are justified in claiming that the tree or the stone or the animal do not fall into doubt in the way the human individual does. The terms which constitute the alternatives of doubt in the human case are

percepts, images, and concepts while the terms which can constitute the alternatives of doubt in the animal and physical world must be altogether different.

But what is it that constitutes the identity or essence of doubt? Is it the terms that contradict one another or the fact of contrariety which results from that mutual contradiction of terms? And if there is every reason to hold that it is the fact of contrariety and not the constituting terms that forms the essence of doubt, where is the point of stressing the illusion that doubt is a mental phenomenon *par excellence*? Will it not be rather more accurate to say that we human beings fall into doubt in a way which is simply different from that of the animals or other existents of the physical world, precisely because our life is constituted by percepts, images, and concepts, while theirs is not? And if the issue is deliberately put in a different form on the strength of a claim that the term "doubt" should be strictly reserved for the human case, should we not find another term in its place, which will cover not only the human cases but the animal and vegetable instances too? For if it be a fact that alternatives do actually form the real point at issue, if by all our professions we are anxious to find out a Reality which is immune from the bane of uncertainty, does it really matter whether we find it among human events or the vegetable events, or even among the protons and electrons of the scientists' heaven? After all, we are out to discover absolute certainty and indisputable Reality. It would be a mistake to think that we started this enquiry for nothing nobler than to preserve human existence at any cost. On the contrary, if this logical enquiry has any meaning, we should be prepared even to sacrifice what we call human dignity, if that is what the logic of thinking demands. It should make no difference to us whether we are reduced to Divinity or animality or a vegetable condition, if that is what indisputable certainty offers us. In very truth, we should be prepared to go wherever the logic of doubt leads us, if we mean seriously that it can

be universal in its scope and covers the whole field of Reality.

Descartes, therefore, was perfectly justified in concluding that the result of systematic doubt might easily lead to exhaustively disastrous consequences if we did not desist from pushing it to its logical limit. He was not mistaken when he implied that we should not be scared by the result, even if it left nothing over except the bare skeleton of its diminished existence. The real trouble with the Cartesian position did not lie with either its stand for the technique of doubting as a very original and effective method of enquiry, or with its claim that the ultimate result of even the most comprehensive form of doubting would not be very far from absolute scepticism. Nor could it be said that Descartes was not aware of the applicability of the technique either as a matter of practical enquiry or as a logical procedure. What he did not realize—and here it is that the real difficulty with the Cartesian position lay, was that nothing of what we call the human mind could be left over if the technique of doubting was actually applied to the contents of human experience. As we have shown already, the human mind or the content which could be definitely and strictly called human would be altogether lost in the fog of doubt after the process of doubting had begun in serious earnest. To use the language of Descartes, one could not possibly find a single instance of strictly human content, the opposite of which could not be conceived. And if he did not actually realize this gruesome consequence, the reason for this possibly was that he never truly contemplated the picture of doubt as essentially a question of alternatives with its presupposition. It might not have struck him that alternatives with consistency do not form a speciality of the strictly human contents in their relation to one another. He might have missed the simple truth that two stones or vegetable growth or animals may be in a state of alternatives or contrariety, just as two human beings or two gods could

be if there were superhuman beings too. The law of alternatives is not the law which confines its operations to human events, exactly as many serious philosophers still hold that the laws of thought are only for historical grounds supposed to be relevant to thought alone. The question that we are dealing with here is by no means simple or easy. Perhaps a full interpretation of our position that Descartes was mistaken about the nature of alternatives should not appear before we have discussed the laws of thought, especially as we hold that the law of alternatives rises straight out of the law of non-contradiction. It seems to us that neither alternatives nor possibilities as notions or ideas have been properly or fully grasped in their true significance by the world of thought, and we may humbly add that the history of speculative thought till to-day missed at least a great chance of accounting for the universe and Reality, as we call it, simply because it did not fully grasp the significance of these two ideas.

And it may be perfectly legitimate to say that Descartes did not realize that the technique of doubting which he invented referred to a law which governed the universe as a whole, and not by any means only a small section or portion of it. It was a misfortune in the history of thought that he did not get hold of its profound significance sufficiently to realize that it was the one law more than any other which was directly responsible for any existent or function that the human mind could ever envisage or contemplate. We shall soon have opportunity to illustrate this point when we proceed to deal with the constructive part of our enquiry. In the meantime we may add that Descartes ought to have clearly distinguished between the actual enquiry by means of the technique of doubting and a mere logical form of it; and if he had made that distinction with sufficient distinctness, he would have seen that he was entitled only to a logical conclusion and nothing more from the result of the technique of doubting. What actual result could possibly follow from its practical

application could not be envisaged by a human mind. The human mind could only logically comprehend either its own demise as the result of doubt or the indisputable background of the final stage of doubting.

Descartes, therefore, was altogether mistaken when he claimed that it was human mind and not mere mind which survived as the logical possibility after the whole of human experience had been conceivably reduced by the technique of doubting to a heap of wreckage. We have explained at length why it could not be human mind, or anywhere near it. We have explained also that the reason why we called it "mind" was that it was the ultimate background of what we started with, namely, human experience. Our assumption was that whatever happened from the beginning of its infection by the method of doubt, down to the last event which marked conceivably the consolidation of the last background, happened without a break or interval between one stage and another of that mind. The process was bound to be continuous in the sense that no two stages of that mind were or could be absolute differents. This claim to continuity could be easily defended as a part of the implication of Descartes' position, even though the category itself may admit of further interpretation. And if we assume for the sake of interpreting Descartes that the whole process, from the first application of doubt to strictly human contents down to the last application where it was bound to stop against an indisputable background, was continuous, we can for formal reasons call that background by the name of mind. And the only definition that would square with its claim is that it possessed the function of standing as a support or presupposition to alternatives. We should call it mind simply because it was a consistency which served as the presupposition to alternatives.

CHAPTER V

FRESH METHOD FOR FURTHER DISCOVERY

Can anything be deduced from mind or the minimum of existence?—not possible to deduce anything—either the laws of thought have to be appealed to or a fresh method has to be discovered for further knowledge—deduction from the laws of thought equally unavailing for a constructive enquiry.

THE question therefore that arises now is, can such a mind, which is after all nothing but the barest minimum of existence, lead us anywhere? Is it possible to analyse it any further and deduce anything else from it? We must not forget that though we have clearly established Reality rather than its contrary, Nothing, and called it "mind" to preserve the consistency of the Cartesian procedure, it is really nothing more concrete or particular than bare or sheer existence. As a matter of fact, the only other conceivable possibility from which we can distinguish it is what we call bare Being. We are confident that it is neither Being nor Nothing; it is, on the contrary, what may be called existence. In other words, if we want to find a tentative definition for "existence" in the initial stage of our enquiry, as distinguished from Being, we shall find it here. Anything existent can appear as consistency or presupposition behind alternatives, or as alternatives. There can be nothing in existence to distinguish it from mind, in the sense that we have taken the term. And Being may be kept quite distinct from both existence and mind.

But we might well seem to be dogmatic in the way we are attaching definitions to terms which have played such conspicuous parts in the history of philosophy. Diverse meanings have been attributed to the term "Being" and the distinction between it and existence has been drawn in a variety of ways. We are aware that our attempt to define the three

terms, Mind, Existence, Being, would have to be grounded on evidence which we are prepared to give in its proper place. In the meantime the main point that we have to discuss is whether it is possible for us to go any further after we have simply assured ourselves that there is at least some Reality which is indisputable. And we can start on that investigation even if our characterization of it as mind or existence, as distinguished from bare Being, may be found to be either insignificant or even meaningless.

To begin with, we cannot deduce anything from it, as it is by definition the most elementary form of existence conceivable; and analysis of it should be equally impossible as it is the most simple entity that we can possibly think of. An attempt to find out its presupposition, again, is bound to end in nothing, as it is inconceivable that it would imply anything else beyond itself—in the sense Kant took implication to mean. We have to remember that this elementary existence resulted from a process of systematic doubting, which led necessarily to the loss or disappearance of every conceivable form of characterization except that of an ultimate consistency. It cannot possibly be supposed to indicate anything else. And after this, to put it to the grind of the dialectic of Hegel would be to imply that it had the capacity to create its opposite—an enormous assumption which the technique of doubting could not possibly leave over. So that none of the known methods which are traditionally used for the purpose of advancing our knowledge from a starting-point seems to be available to us. The alternatives, therefore, are that we shall either have to devise a new method for fresh discovery or be humble enough to be content with the assurance that at least mind or existence in its elementary and original form can be taken as indisputable certainty.

The discovery of a method however is by no means a matter of choice or deduction; and if it is a fact that we cannot utilize the usual methods, we can only fall back upon

the laws of thought to find out if a clue about any further progress can be derived from them.

It seems perfectly obvious that if we have any Reality as an indisputable truth, we can safely conclude that at least the Negative known as Nothing is bound to be excluded by it—provided the Law of Contradiction has still any potency left in it.

"Nothing" cannot be there if even the minimum form of Reality or Being or Existence is there. "Nothing" is incompatible with Reality in any degree or shape or volume. And if Nothing is not there, it follows under the aegis of the same law that Reality alone in its fullness and completeness can be or must be there. The reason for that sudden revelation simply is that between Reality and Nothing there can be no other position which is conceivable or legitimate. Either there can be Nothing, actually there, and then like the black night it will efface every sign and trace of existence, or there will be Reality eternally existing, making it possible for every conceivable kind of entity or existence to have as full a chance as possible.

The discovery, therefore, that the technique of doubt leads at least to the survival of minimum existence is significant enough and is much too potent not to lead to the discovery of the Reality itself. What it means is that we can fully believe that the Reality is, if we have reason enough to believe that at least the minimum form of existence is beyond all doubt. There can be no question of our falling into doubt if Reality is; and the reason simply is that the indisputable assurance about minimum Reality is sufficient to exclude the possibility or the dread that Nothing is.

But the discovery that Reality is does or need not imply that we are in the agreeable position at once to recover all the characterization of it which the method of doubt had already put under a cloud. The proposition that Reality is means nothing more than that Nothing is not. It is different no doubt from the proposition—the minimum form of

existence is, but we cannot by any chance utilize it for advancing our knowledge any further. It is utterly incapable of answering questions about the characterization of Reality, as it is still but a very elementary belief, however indisputable its claim might be. We may, as we have said, contradict with its aid the suggestion and belief that Nothing is and Reality is not, but nothing more is possible. In other words, the belief that Reality is should not be confused with the Reality itself. It could be interpreted as meaning that Reality is or that we are rooted in Reality. And certainly after this belief has arisen there can be no occasion or necessity for God or man to generate or create Reality, or to destroy or contradict the Negative. What it positively means is that if there is anything pervasively and absolutely present, it must be the Reality itself and not the empty, black nothingness that sits like a nightmare on our dreams.

But it does not follow that we have therefore at once recovered all our lost beliefs and faiths or that the whole of the universe which we had to lose steadily and gradually as a result of systematic doubt has been restored to us. As a matter of fact, both the speculative world with its conflicting categories and ideas and the practical world with its conflicting values and interests still remain exactly where they did. The belief that Reality is, is not expected to contradict any of the doubts that we fell into as a result of our systematic questioning of experience. In other words, because we believe that Reality is, it does not necessarily follow that we know how to solve the outstanding conflicts of the speculative world; for instance, those between infinite and finite, universal and particular, matter and mind, subject and predicate, law and freedom, perception and conception, noumenon and phenomenon, etc.

And we might refer once again to the classical distinction between the belief that Reality is and the belief that Reality is such and such. This distinction has been made in the history of thought ever since speculation seriously began.

We do not impersonate the Reality by cherishing the belief that it is, rather than its contrary, Nothing. We only escape the dread that perhaps even Reality has to be created or generated. This is a very vital experience, if only because the dread, however mistaken, is a fact that appears on the human horizon when, for instance, the spectre of Nothing seems to have destroyed all beliefs.

The discovery, however, that Reality is, is by no means fruitless or meaningless, even though it does not restore to us all at once the diverse beliefs and faiths that we had to lose by doubt. At least it fills us with great hope and keen assurance; and perhaps all creative work, whether on the speculative or practical plane, is preceded by such assurance. Some of the deepest experiences of the human race on record did not extend any further. And what special reason there is for such deep contentment we shall have the chance of discussing when we come to deal with religious experiences.

There are different methods in use, by the practice of which we can carry our investigations further. One well-known way is to seek the aid of mystical or esoteric experiences, and with that inestimable help to give an account of Reality in terms of what those experiences might happen to suggest. We have deep respect for this method, and for reasons which are traceable to our ancestry. Unfortunately, this method, however estimable, is not open to us, and that for various reasons, the chief of which is that we happen to have undertaken a strictly philosophic enquiry. There is, again, the well-practised dogmatic method where, like the mystic, we are supposed to start with intuitive perceptions of categories and propositions, and then work out the structure of the universe in the manner or style of the mathematician, who followed the deductive method in the main. We do not propose to follow this method either, as we have unfortunately no such intuitions. Besides, it is a fact that the intuitions that were offered by the well-known dogmatic systems in the past did not quite serve their purpose satisfactorily. Then

there is the almost universally practised method of the scientific world, which builds with great humility on mere hypothesis. Here again, strangely enough, we trust to our intuitions more than to our perceptions to give us the necessary hypothesis, although we do not desist from keeping our eye on what we call the percepts and particulars which we as scientists feel bound to believe as indisputable. Here, too, we find it equally difficult to avail ourselves of this method, partly because we have no hypothesis to go by, and because it is difficult for us to be satisfied with what are known as probability and verification as evidence or test of truth.

If we have to be strict about the method of doubting, we have to hold that the method by trial and error is by no means an unusually indisputable criterion. And as we have already said, we cannot ask what the term Reality presupposes as we already know its precise meaning; nor can we analyse it, as it has really and truly no inside or complexity in its nature. It would be stupid, however, to suggest after all this that we might try to find out what the term Reality meant in the history of thought and trust to the tradition of language to help us. We know already what the term could possibly mean, and that is the end of it. The point that we have to keep in mind is, that the belief in Reality to which we have been reduced, arose after a wholesale disappearance under the influence of doubt of all tradition—scientific, linguistic, dogmatic, esoteric, and deductive. We have got a very precise and definite belief, and the Reality which forms its subject-matter just means that its contrary, Nothing, is not. It also means that it is, and nothing more. With such a belief it seems to us obvious that we cannot go any further especially as we have nothing more to help us in the shape of esoteric, rationalistic, or scientific intuitions. We have to choose some other course.

CHAPTER VI

REVIEW OF THE LAWS OF THOUGHT AND A FRESH INTERPRETATION

Review of the laws of thought—a fresh interpretation of the law of contradiction—a new theory of Negative and Reality—the basis of our constructive enquiry—main conclusion—not only Reality is, rather than the Negative, but Reality is in two states, Actual and Possible—to exist or to be real is to appear in two separate states in succession—Actuality and Possibility are independent states.

THE course that we shall now pursue is to seek the aid of the laws of thought. We shall try to find out if these laws can be of any help to us in restoring our knowledge of the universe. As a matter of fact, we have nothing to fall back upon in this attempt to build up the universe except the indisputable belief that Reality is, and the equally indisputable certainty about the laws of thought. If these two certainties can be worked together for the purpose of building up a system of Reality, nothing could be more ideal as a piece of pure logic or metaphysics.

We cannot help thinking that, as philosophers, we are not warranted in availing ourselves of any experience or belief except what is guaranteed to us by these laws. It may be true that intuitions, visions and hypotheses, however they might arise, may be not only useful but perfectly effective and legitimate modes of characterizing the Reality. And he must be blind indeed who would claim that the philosophers, prophets, and scientists who did not strictly follow the line laid down by the laws of thought never found any truth worth recording. But it is a fact that they have so far failed to solve the problems of life and thought with the aid of what truths they gathered from visions and intuitions. And what is more to the point, it is a fact, too, that they did not

follow the philosophic method. Unlike them all, we propose to follow that method with as much strictness and purity as possible.

But the question may be raised, can we trust the laws of thought themselves? Are the laws above dispute or suspicion?

The question need not imply that the laws are still in a state of uncertainty. What it does imply is that some of our philosophers seem to be still in a state of difficulty or uncertainty about them. Not even the most absolute and indisputable certainties and truths may escape the uncertain and doubtful mind or questioning attitude of our philosphers. It is one thing to say that the certainties are certainties once and for ever, as the fixed and permanent landmarks in the world of Reality, another thing to suggest that philosophers and lay folk may not be either unaware of them or be actually in the disagreeable mood to contest them. Perhaps when we get into the heart of the mysteries of Reality we shall realize how such an apparent discrepancy is possible. We feel we know how these discrepancies arise from the very depths or root of Reality. We are not therefore surprised that even the laws of thought are sought to be questioned by some philosophers, even though it is patent that the act of questioning is perhaps just the way by which we can affirm them.

As far as we know three distinct charges have been brought against them:

(*a*) They are tautologous.
(*b*) They are applicable to Reality if it is there, but cannot generate Reality.
(*c*) They are not necessarily indisputable, because they are laws of thought which is by its nature both human and strictly limited.

As regards the first charge, we have no option but to leave its analysis for the moment. It is really an issue that can be discussed when the strictly logical issues come up for discussion; which means that we have to postpone its discussion till we come to discuss our own logical theory. The second charge, we feel, has a good deal of truth in its favour. Even if

we do not raise the issue whether the laws are laws of thought or laws that govern the whole of Reality, it does not seem that we can claim that they are of any use in discovering or generating Reality. To our mind, they are useful in the sense that they are applicable to judgement and experience if any such are there as a matter of fact. We know what this application means—it is to find out if the judgement or experience in question is consistent or contradictory. If it is contradictory, the claim about its reality or validity naturally drops. If it is not contradictory the possibility arises about its validity or reality.

It is with the third charge that the difficulty truly arises; for it does not appear to us at all how it can be seriously made. It has been suggested that the contradictory need not be regarded as meaningless on the ground that the human mind to which it appears to be meaningless is after all of biological origin. If nothing else, at least, its origin shows that it is subject to limitation; and it is this limitation that is responsible for the fact that the contradictory appears to be meaningless.

The implication is that, to the unlimited mind, which is supposed to have no biological origin, the contradictory might appear to be perfectly significant, as full of meaning as the consistent is. The law of contradiction, therefore, derives its claim to determine indisputable truth solely from the fact of the limited character of the human mind. The contradictory is indisputably meaningless only in the sense that our unfortunate human minds are precluded from viewing it except within a limited range.

Whether this criticism of the claim on behalf of the law of contradiction is valid we shall presently discuss; but the case for the critic will certainly improve if we add that the mystics and advocates of esoteric and religious experience generally have not been slow in claiming that the contradictory too has a meaning. The way in which statements are made about Divinity, and expressions are given to mystical experiences are sufficient evidence on that point. And yet it

is not the mystics alone who would repudiate the laws of thought under the stress of profound experiences. The philosophers too are reduced to such a position when they fail to account for the whole of our experience in terms of their own favourite or special categories. We need not go to the scientific world for illustration, for there it is not logic and truth that matter principally, but mostly either the pragmatic ideal or, frankly, chance or possibility of verification.

If the contradictory admits of verification—(and who can say what we cannot claim to have verified!)—it comes out to be just as good or valid as the consistent in spite of its frank inconsistency. The whole of our modern life, it seems, is deliberately based on such a flimsy irresponsible claim.

The case for the critic of the laws of thought therefore does not stand forlorn or unsupported. And yet there are five simple points which it is difficult to see how the critic can easily get over:

(*a*) In the first place, whatever statement by way of criticism can or may be made against the laws, it automatically invokes the blessings of the law. The criticism in question is expected to be taken as consistent and not contradictory. That seems to be universally held.

(*b*) In the second place, how could we say that the contradictory has a meaning if the contradictory is either nothing or mere volume of sound? Before it can be claimed that the contradictory will and can appear to be significant to the unlimited mind, it will at least have to be established what will be significant. Could we make any statement or predication about the literal nothing? Can we argue against it or in favour of it? To say that the contradictory is meaningless is one thing and to say that it has a meaning is quite another.

(*c*) In the third place, assuming that human mind is of biological origin and strictly limited in its character, how does it follow that there could be an unlimited mind which had no biological origin? On the other hand, where is the harm in thinking that the human

mind is not merely biological in its origin but may also be divine in its origin?

(*d*) In the fourth place, may it not be that precisely because it is not merely biological in its origin, it avoids the mischance of confusing the contradictory with the significant? Have we ever consulted our strictly biological neighbours as to how the contradictory appears to them? Could we gather such invaluable evidence even if we wanted to?

(*e*) In the fifth place, it is unnecessary to saddle the unlimited mind with responsibilities when, as a matter of fact, we have as little chance of consulting it about the justice or efficacy of that fateful step as we have of verifying our presentiment about the biological beings.

In the last analysis we do not, as a matter of fact, make such an extraordinary plea on behalf of the contradictory except when we fall into distress, due either to our failure to think out problems systematically or to the obvious objections of our opponents and critics. The vast field of both speculative and practical existence is left undisturbed by any such plea. Both while we argue and contemplate as thinkers on deep metaphysical issues or run the affairs of practical life involving vital issues of life and death, we keep scrupulously clean in our practice of the laws of thought. There seems to be no other alternative left to us.

It might be taken for granted therefore, that the charge against the law of contradiction or the plea for the contradictory is nothing worse than a misfortune which falls to our lot simply because we are human beings subject to the law of necessity. It is at least one of the major blunders that the human race had the misfortune to commit.

The laws of thought have to be accepted as indisputable and absolute; for there is no other alternative. And the issue for us with regard to them is, can we utilize the laws for discovering further knowledge about Reality, the characterization of which we voluntarily left as doubtful and disputable? There can be no question about our utilizing the

laws as there is no need for us to generate or create Reality—we have only to apply the laws to an existent fact.

We are fully convinced that the laws of thought would be of no use if we had not Reality with us in some shape or form all the time. And it might be pointed out that not only our enquiry but all enquiries must be supposed to start on the basis of some instance or other of Reality. There must be sufficient Reality to make an enquiry possible. And the main point of an enquiry is to discover or find out how much of the experience that we happen to possess would stand the test of doubt. Descartes, for instance, did not as a matter of fact start his enquiry in a vacuum: his point was not whether we had any experience at all or whether there was any Reality at all. He did not ask the question whether we can create or generate Reality or whether Reality has ever been there at all. His point simply was to discover how much of Reality or experience that he happened to know or possess was liable to be doubted. He might easily be charged, therefore, with the belief or suspicion that Reality and experience might cease to exist as a result of doubt, but he could never be charged with the assumption that there never was any Reality which we could even doubt. And the suspicion that Reality and experience may come to nothing need not be taken to imply that there might be literally the absolute Negative in the end. The most that such a suspicion could imply was that we might be reduced to a state of uncertainty. Nothing worse than a state of doubt or uncertainty could result from it. And uncertainty need not be taken as another name for diminution of identity or a contradiction of it. Even the ultimate Reality itself may fall into a state of uncertainty and yet retain its identity with scrupulous certainty. We shall soon see what uncertainty really means.

But the Reality that we actually possess, and to which the laws of thought could be applied, is nothing more robust than what we have already described as the belief that Reality is.

That elementary belief, or the Reality corresponding to it, is all that we can deal with to get the best out of the laws of thought. What further conclusion then about the universe or the characterization of Reality could we possibly elicit from this elementary belief—the slender Reality that resulted as the residuum of systematic doubt?

The belief or the experience under consideration is no doubt perfectly consistent and indisputably true. We cannot conceivably dispute it, precisely because it was the presupposition of dispute or doubt itself. Here is a truth or fact which nothing that can ever occur or repeat itself in the future can contest or throw into the shades of doubt. It is not a truth or fact of which we are merely immediately conscious, or which had just stood the test of verification, and that over a long range of time and space. There is nothing merely probable about it, nor is it the fruit of some profound emotion or impulse to believe, whether induced by authority vested in tradition or by some hidden, super-phenomenal source which can be approached through the medium of ritual and incantation. The fact or truth that we are starting with is absolute and indisputable, as it is the presupposition of doubt itself and stands on the authority of the law of contradiction. If we have to doubt this we shall have to relapse literally into a primal state; we shall have to emulate those who in distress have to recant the professions of a lifetime, and re-establish nonsense as significant. There is no reason why we should waste our opportunity.

But what could possibly be expected of the law of thought with regard to further knowledge if we have already satisfied ourselves that the Reality which we have established is consistent and integral? Does not the Law of Contradiction simply discover the consistency or inconsistency of an experience or judgement or statement? What else can it possibly do without assuming the right or capacity of generating and creating Reality?

The main issue of our investigation begins here; and we

have sufficient humility to be aware that what we are going to suggest may not appear to be altogether reasonable to all minds. For us, the die is cast and the Rubicon is crossed. We stand or fall by the interpretation of the laws of thought that we shall propound as the basis of our system.

We shall choose the Law of non-contradiction as the main source of our help, and the analysis that we shall suggest will follow that form of the law which tradition until to-day has universally held.

There is no reason why we should not go by its straightforward formulation, e.g. A cannot be A and Not-A at the same time. We really do not improve it considerably if we put it in a more learned form, namely, "we cannot apprehend the union of two contradictory propositions in a single proposition." What we have to note is that the point of the law is to prohibit committing a contradiction. "As the supreme principle of all thought it lays down that what contradicts itself cannot be truly real and actual." There can be no question that if there is anything which the law emphasizes it is the fact of contradiction. If we are to make anything out of it, we have to note that there is such a thing as contradiction; and our object here is simply to discuss what contradiction really meant.

It has been held by many serious thinkers that we should find a meaning of this idea of contradiction in what is known as incompatibles. Some have argued that if there were no incompatible qualities, the logical Law of Contradiction would have had no application. Others have said that "in failing to apprehend the union of two contradictory propositions in a single proposition we become aware of the Law of Contradiction."

What then is incompatibility? Can we consider A and Not-A as incompatibles? There is no difficulty in seeing that A and Not-A stand in the relation of Positive and Negative, which means that if A is there, Not-A cannot be there. In other words, one of these can be in existence but not both.

That seems to be the meaning of the relationship between the Positive and the Negative.

But could we say that they are incompatible too? Is the relationship of incompatibility only another name for the relation between the Positive and the Negative? If we are not bound by any terminological necessity we might expect some additional quality or connotation of the term "Incompatible." And it is a fact that we call opposites incompatibles. Opposition of terms seems to be clearly indicated by the notion of incompatibility. The relation of incompatibility therefore cannot be identified with the relation between the Positive and the Negative, if only because they do not oppose one another. It seems to be obvious that the Positive and the Negative cannot oppose one another for the simple reason that they cannot both exist together. The idea of opposition implies at least the co-existence of the opposing terms.

What then is really meant by the Law of Contradiction when it states that A and Not-A contradict one another and are incompatibles, when as a matter of fact, it is equally held that they cannot co-exist and oppose one another? What is the point of suggesting that either A or Not-A can exist but not both of them together, unless it is implied that they conceivably must have another form of existence outside their actual condition? The point that we are trying to make is that we do not get the full history of A and Not-A in the bare statement of the Law. The simple statement that A and Not-A cannot both exist points to some other region where possibly they might exist together; and it might well be that by the rigour and necessity of that other form of existence they are precluded from enjoying a mutually coexistent state in what we call the actual condition. Could we discover what that form of existence could be?

To begin with, there can be no question that the Law does not consider the notion of the contrary or the Negative as inconceivable and impossible. There could be no occasion for the Law to refer to it so pointedly, if it was really inconceiv-

able and impossible. It is equally a fact that the history of thought is replete with instances where the opposite or the contrary or the negative has been fully recognized. We may quote some noted cases:

(*a*) Everything of itself turns into its opposite.
(*b*) Inconceivability of the opposite is the only sure test of truth.
(*c*) The self implies the not-self.
(*d*) Consciousness can be thought of as diminishing through an infinite number of stages down to Nothing.

These are just a few instances of the tacit recognition of the contrary or the negative or the opposite: and we have quoted them as they stand to the credit of some of the keenest minds of the speculative world.

The question that we shall raise is, what exactly is meant or implied when it is tacitly recognized by the Law of Contradiction and keen philosophic minds that the contrary or the negative is not impossible or inconceivable? Does it not follow that the negative conceivably has just as much right or possibility to exist as the positive? What else could be the meaning? And if, as a matter of fact, the positive, for instance, A, actually exists, does it not follow that the failure of Not-A to exist has to be accounted for? It would be perfectly correct to argue that as the possibility of Not-A was on a par with the possibility of A, it, by inertia, was bound to materialize if it were not prevented from doing so. We have to believe therefore in an additional process or event which must be supposed to have happened to exclude the actuality of Not-A. If, as a matter of fact, A became actual and existent, it must have been equally a fact that the possibility of Not-A must have been frustrated or contradicted or counteracted or excluded.

We are not sure if we are not running too fast in our analysis of the fateful chances of the Negative. It may sound altogether strange and unusual to the logical world. But it

does not seem to us that the contrary or the Negative could be disposed of, as it were by a wave of the hand, or that the demise of its prospects as an actual entity could be laid at the door of chance or caprice. If the Law brought it inside the region of conceivability, it granted the Negative what is called in law a prescriptive right to exist, and this can be neutralized or counteracted only if a fresh procedure is invoked to nip it in the bud of possibility. There must be a region, therefore, where this neutralization takes place, a region necessarily of possibilities, and possibilities alone.

It seems as if we have, by a curious process of reasoning, wriggled ourselves into a region of potential existence which the celebrated Greek philosopher, who has had more adoration in modern Oxford than even the prophet of her religion, discovered. The region of possibilities that we have discovered looks very much like Aristotle's potential state; and if it were possible for us to believe in that Aristotelian category, we would unhesitatingly congratulate ourselves on our discovery. We do not, however, see any point in the notion of potentiality. To us it is inconceivable how the same thing could exist in two different states:

(*a*) One, unformed, indeterminate and chaotic.
(*b*) The other, definite, determinate and consistent.

We shall offer evidences for this inability on our part to accept the Aristotelian distinction between the potential and the actual in its proper place. The possibility that we are referring to is not to be confused with potentiality; it is sufficiently determinate and consistent if it is anything. We shall soon see what it is.

But before we proceed to discuss possibility, we might repeat again that it is from the Law of Contradiction that we have derived its validity. If the contrary or the negative is conceivable, and if the positive alone exists, the failure of the negative to exist has to be accounted for. In other words, it is not enough that we have shown that A exists, we shall

have to show also how and why Not-A does not exist. We shall have to demonstrate the region of possibility where this frustration took place. The region of possibility is the direct inference from the fact of Not-A's non-existence under the aegis of the Law of Contradiction. The Law of Contradiction therefore should not be taken at its face value, as if it were a simple and naïve statement indicating the existence of A and Not-A as fortune favoured them. The notion of possibility rises straight out of the meaning of that statement.

And yet it has to be kept in mind that there is nothing in the law to suggest that the state of possibility must precede or follow the state of actuality. The relation of time which the notion of possibility or actuality implies is entirely a matter of traditional belief. We are accustomed to believe that the possible must precede the actual. That belief, really and truly, is the same as we hold on the question of the potential. Possibility or the possible refers to the actual, no doubt, but it refers to it in the same sense as that in which the incomplete and unformed refers to the formed or the complete. This belief may or may not be true; but it gets no support from the Law of Contradiction. It will make no difference to the Law if the state of possibility is found to follow or imply the state of actuality.

We will for the moment revert to the main position with which our constructive enquiry started, namely the belief which is indisputable, that Reality is. We reached this belief as a result of systematic doubt. It meant that however difficult it might be for us to prove what the nature of Reality really was, or whether the categories with which we have hitherto sought to characterize it were or were not valid or consistent, it could never be necessary for us to disprove Nothing. We stood rooted in the absolute certainty that Reality, in its completeness, was. And we may add that it is this truth which both philosophers and prophets honestly tried to express by the phrase—Reality is eternal and without a beginning or end. And if they failed to make good their

position, it was not because Reality was not and Nothing was, but because they failed, in spite of strenuous efforts, to formulate the notions of eternity and infinity in a consistent form. In any case, it can never be maintained that they were not perfectly justified in assuming that Reality was, in its completeness, whatever that might mean.

But if Reality is to be taken as eternally actual, what is really meant by its being actual? Obviously it means that Reality has been there eternally, to function in any form in which it conceivably could. In other words, it could never have been in a state of potentiality, or in an incomplete or indeterminate condition. Literally, an indeterminate and incomplete Reality is a contradiction in terms. Either Reality is or it is not—there can be no *via media* or middle course. Even if Reality is called upon to deal with its contrary, that would be only an additional reason why it has to be already there. And if, again, such an eventuality reduces it to a state which is different from its positive and normal state, the change in question would imply too that it was bound to be there already in as complete a state as possible.

The fact is that we can never go behind the indisputable certainty of the actuality of Reality. At any rate, that fact stands firm and indisputable, and if by the Law of Contradiction the contrary of Reality which is neither impossible nor inconceivable has to be dealt with as a possibility, it follows equally that the state of possibility is bound to imply or pre-suppose the actual or positive state. It follows, again, that the Actual Reality has to pass into a state sufficient and necessary for the purpose of excluding and frustrating the actuality of its contrary. And what could possibly be that state if it were not a state of possibility?

We have to hold therefore, under the aegis of the Law of Contradiction, that Reality has to be in two different states:

(*a*) the state in which it is positive and actual and in which it may be supposed to realize itself;

(*b*) the state in which it is a possibility and in which it excludes or frustrates the actuality of its contrary.

The law is bound to operate because the Reality is there as a matter of fact; and under its direct sanction the actual has to be in both states:

(*a*) the positive and the actual;
(*b*) the negative and the possible.

And it is too late in the day to create unnecessary difficulties by bringing up the complaint that the Laws are relevant to thought alone. There can be no question that the negative and possible state is just as necessary and valid as the actual and positive state.

Still, we are not here dealing with a case of deduction from the Law. It is inconceivable that the two states of Reality could be deduced from the Law of Contradiction as if they formed parts or contents of that Law. There are two things which the Law will not permit us to do:

(*a*) We cannot utilize it as premises from which to draw a conclusion.
(*b*) We cannot use it as causes from which to derive effects.

What we can do with it is to interpret the existent fact, to discover its real proportion or its exact and accurate significance. And it can be said with perfect reason that the Law is adamant in its application to Reality or to any existent fact, if it is there already as an indisputable certainty. Besides, it makes no difference to that application whether the reality in question is what we call ultimate and actual or partial and possible. Not even God, assuming that the term is only a synonym for ultimate Reality, would be free from this peculiar rigour of the Law, or even God could not create or contemplate an alternative.

We can therefore safely conclude that we have advanced one more step with the aid of the Law of thought. We have

discovered that as Reality is, so Reality is in two states, Actual and Possible. And the issue now is to find out if we can derive further information by an analysis of the state of possibility. What is exactly meant by that state? We know that the meaning or origin of this state lies in the fact or necessity of frustrating or excluding the actuality of the contrary of Reality. How does the frustration take place? What is the relation between the two states? What happens to Reality as it passes into the second state? We shall begin with a fuller analysis of the state of possibility.

CHAPTER VII

NOTIONS OF POSSIBILITY AND EXISTENCE

Analysis of the notion of possibility—the law of contradiction, the source of its origin—in emphasizing the Negative, the law implied the notion of possibility—the notion of possibility resolves the conflict between two competing claims of the law—definition of possibility—state of possibility is the state in which Reality stands in relation to the Negative—it is a state of possibilities pure and simple—both Reality and the Negative exist as possibilities—how they actually exist—analysis of the notion of existence—characteristic feature, continuous and perpetual happening of events or unlimited possibilities of achievement—analysis of these terms—review of the notion of existence in relation to non-existence, substance, category etc.—our theory of existence.

THE term or the notion, "possibility," is by no means an easy notion or term to explain, if we go by the history of thought. Perhaps nowhere, except in the Aristotelian school, was the notion of possibility considered altogether valid. If it could not be disowned, it had to be described as the subsistent as distinguished from the existent. And even if one does not repudiate the distinction between the existent and the subsistent, it is difficult to believe that philosophic thought generally approved the idea of subsistent. It will be our care presently to deal with this distinction, and the different senses of the term "possibility." In the meantime we shall discuss what we mean precisely by the notion of possibility, and where exactly the source of its origin could be traced.

As regards the source of its origin, we frankly identify it with the Law of Contradiction. If the Law of Contradiction had not definitely referred to the Negative there would have been no occasion for discussing possibility. The truth is that the Law of Contradiction is perfectly neutral so far as the claim or validity of the positive and negative is concerned.

A and Not-A, to follow the traditional way of symbolizing them, are to the Law equally conceivable and possible. In fact it would make no difference to the Law whether the positive or the negative actually prevailed or existed. The Law does not legislate about existence, if we can talk in that non-technical manner. Its jurisdiction arises only after the positive or the negative has somehow become actual; and then it is absolute in its decree, that the positive or the negative, as the case may be, can no longer preserve its right to actuality.

We have to indicate this feature of the Law repeatedly as it seems certain to us that we do not realize that even if there were Nothing rather than Reality that would not constitute a violation of the Law of Contradiction. Besides, if we believe in Reality, that belief is not a deduction or inference from the law of thought. We began our enquiry with that belief and the law of thought only helped us in concluding that we could not abandon it without committing a breach of the Law. The systematic doubt was an attempt under the direct inspiration of the Law of Contradiction to test that belief.

But if the Law of Contradiction considered the Negative or the contrary as perfectly conceivable, it followed that the stage of possibility had to be implied. In the nature of things, there was nothing to prevent the negative, if it was possible, from becoming actual. Recognition of the Negative necessarily meant:

(*a*) That the Negative was not the contradictory or the impossible.
(*b*) That it had to be neutralized if it could not be actual.

Traditionally, conceivability implies at least the capacity or possibility of realization, as some of our keenest minds never forgot to emphasize. What, unfortunately, they did not emphasize was that once conceivability was conceded to anything, the need of its neutralization followed, provided it was not to become actual. Somehow it was not noticed that the actual state in which either the positive or the

negative could conceivably be, was not the only existent state that could be or was. The state of possibility was equally another existent state. In other words, the philosophers forgot to take account of the fact that existence meant two distinct orders or types instead of one:

(*a*) the Actual and Positive existence;
(*b*) the Possible and Negative existence.

What this omission meant for the history of thought, the controversy about the subsistent and existent alone will show.

But if the view of possibility that we have been trying to explain is not objected to as irresponsible, it might be utilized for solving the difficulty in connection with the two claims by the Law of Contradiction:

(*a*) A and Not-A cannot both exist.
(*b*) A and Not-A are opposites.

Evidently A and Not-A cannot be opposites if A and Not-A cannot both exist—opposites must both exist to oppose one another. The difficulty about the Law, therefore, arose precisely because if A and Not-A have to be taken as opposites, one could not at the same time believe that one of them only could exist. The two statements contradict each other if we take them to imply only one type of existence.

But if we take the two statements to refer to two distinct orders of existence of A and Not-A, the difficulty need not arise. There is no reason why it should not be impossible for A and Not-A to exist together if by existence we mean actual and absolute existence. On the other hand, A and Not-A could easily exist together if by existence we mean possible and relative existence. There is no other way to account for the claims, and we see no reason why the claims should not be accounted for exactly in this way. So that A and Not-A could be justly described as opposites and yet not be capable of existing together as actual facts.

If we now try to define possibility, we have to define it roughly as the state where Reality stands in relation to the Negative. This, to our mind, should be taken as the pure logical sense of the notion of possibility. Every other sense that one may have to add to it will be derived from this as the fountain-head. Under no possible circumstances could it be contradicted.

It follows that possibility does not imply or indicate any subsistent state; there is no such thing as a subsistent state. There is only the state of existence and existence is of two types: (*a*) the possible, (*b*) the actual. Between the two, the whole meaning of Reality is completed; and nothing short of both of them can satisfy the claim of existence.

This brief analysis of the notion of possibility may for the time suffice, and we may turn to the issue—if possibility is another name for the state in which the neutralization of the Negative takes place, or where Reality stands in relation to the Negative, what exactly is the form in which it actually appears? If it is a state in which possibilities alone can exist, how is Reality expected to appear in it?

Evidently the possibility of the Negative implies necessarily the possibility of Reality. If and when the possibility of Nothing exists as a fact, Reality can and must exist only as a possibility. If the Negative cannot exist as actual when Reality is actual, Reality cannot exist as actual if Nothing is existent. If we believe that there is such a thing as the possibility of Nothing, we have also to believe that there must be equally such a thing as the possibility of Reality.

And to find out how exactly the two possibilities will exist we have to discuss the category of existence.

The usual way to define existence is to distinguish it from its direct contrary, Nothing or non-existence. If Nothing, or non-existence, has to be taken as absolute void or empty, blank nothingness in which even identity cannot thrive, existence, as its direct opposite, must at least imply what may be called roughly, perpetuity and completeness. This is

very nearly the general position, and we do not see any reason why we should not endorse it. But perpetuity and completeness are terms which are very much in use in popular and literary expression; it is difficult to be exact about them. What can be said with more precision is that the state of existence which is clearly distinguishable from non-existence must make room for perpetual or non-ending series of events or experience. There could and should be no chance in it for what may be called the final closing-in or termination of events. In popular language, the existent must be continuously on, so that it may for ever be baffling non-existence. In it there must be a provision for what tradition has sought to describe as the infinite possibilities of achievement. So that nothing that could possibly happen should fall outside its scope. It must be another name for the totality of events, or the absolute, with a sufficiency and comprehensiveness which only the unlimited and the eternal, according to tradition, may possess, though all these terms may have to be interpreted over again with considerable modifications.

Still, this perfectly legitimate description may appear to be rather an unusual way of interpreting the category of existence. The description given above has been utilized practically by the whole of philosophic tradition for the ultimate Reality, or God. It is rather unusual that a bare category, and the one which is the most elementary, should be practically identified with ultimate Reality. And it will not be correct by any means to seek precedent for such a usage in the manner in which the category of Being has been used, for instance, by the Eleatics and Greek philosophers. For Being, with the Eleatics, is not a category but only another name for ultimate Reality. The Being of the Eleatics, for instance, from which everything follows and which is the only Reality in existence, is very different from the Being which Hegel could not honestly distinguish from non-Being or Nothing. If we do not mean by existence or Being, ulti-

mate Reality, like the Eleatics, our usage must appear to be strange indeed.

We have to explain, therefore, whether existence is a category or predicate, and if it is not a predicate or category, whether it can be distinguished from ultimate Reality.

To repeat history very broadly, existence has been on the whole supposed to be the most elementary predicate that we can associate with any entity; or taken to be the most elementary reality itself. The existence of anything is supposed to be just the bare statement about it which is made if only to distinguish it from Nothing. It has been seriously held that the entity in question which is supposed to be existent must at least be something else before it could be called existent. What is called function, for instance, is supposed to imply existence. The non-existent, as we all know, has no function. And strangely enough the illusion has always prevailed that existence serves the purpose of a support or foundation to any entity, so that the entity might be able to act and function. Existence achieves nothing but it makes every achievement possible. You cannot characterize or classify it, as it is the basis of all characterization and classification, and yet you cannot deny it. It is the most inexplicable and yet it is the most indisputable of our beliefs. Even our Philosophers did not hesitate to tie up the divine claim almost inextricably with it. We do not as yet know if the ontological argument has lost all its advocacy. In any case it seems that it has not been possible so far to deal with existence except as a category or the necessary presupposition of a category.

And yet one can hardly accept the view that existence is a predicate or the basis of a predicate. We cannot, for instance, think that the proposition "fire burns" means that there is an entity called fire, which has at least two predicates: (*a*) existence, (*b*) burning. What this proposition truly means it is too early yet to explain. We shall have to discuss the

whole theory of judgement before we can fully explain its meaning. What can at the moment be suggested is that "existence" cannot be regarded as a predicate of "fire," even if "burning" can be. And when we imply that "burning" can conceivably be a predicate, we do not mean by "predicate" what is called common character or the source of relations, as it has been universally understood to mean. The notion of common character, in the sense that it existed in more than one particular, irrespective of time and space, is meaningless to us. We are positive that neither "burning" nor "existence" can be a predicate in the sense of "common character," as we do not find anything but mystical sense in that notion. Nor do we believe in the notion of relation in the sense that it relates or connects terms. And we promise our readers that we shall give due evidence for every one of these strange indictments.

We do not, however, mean that a rejection of the notion of predicate, in the sense of "common character" and relation as relating terms would involve the rejection of the notions of category or predicate altogether. On the contrary, all these terms will have to be retained for use in logical thinking; though with fresh interpretations. Besides it will have to be shown how the notion of common character arose in connection with the notion of predicate precisely because we have to preserve the distinction between subject and object, percept and concept, particular and universal, etc.

But it does not follow that we can maintain that existence can be a predicate in any sense whatsoever. The chief difficulty is that existence, as such, is indistinguishable from the Negative or Nothing. We have already referred to the Hegelian dictum, "Being is identical with Nothing." That dictum might be taken as a suggestion that Existence as such, or Being, can be neither a subject nor a predicate. And the reason for that suggestion conceivably was that Being or Existence was incapable of achieving anything. The assumption might have been that if anything has to be dis-

tinguished from the Negative it must be proved that it is a subject which is capable of bearing predicates or of acting to realize a specific end. It is quite likely that Hegel might have thought that Being or Existence as such was not capable either of acting for some end or bearing any predicate; at any rate, there could be no other reason as far as we can see for his making such an astoundingly surprising statement—Being is Nothing.

But we agree with Hegel that Existence, as such, or Being, is an absolute nondescript in logic. The fact is, that we can neither trace any function to it, nor take it as a subject which is capable of bearing any predicate. There seems to be no reason why we should try to distinguish it from the Negative.

Conceivably, there could be an occasion when it might have both exercised a function and achieved an end. If, by some miracle, the Negative had existed instead of the Positive, one might imagine that Existence as such, or pure Being, would have had to exist to challenge it. If the idea of pure Being ever arose, this imaginary and conceptual possibility of the Negative might have been partly responsible for its strange origin.

But the miracle, unfortunately, did not happen, as it could not. Besides, we all know that the existence of the Negative would have inevitably been fatal to the functioning of existence, as such.

The question, therefore, may be legitimately raised, why was existence regarded as a predicate at all. And it may be suggested in reply that the conception of pure Being or Existence, as such, might have arisen purely as a result of a belief in the so-called degrees of Reality. If we can believe that Reality can be divided and gradually diminished into ever smaller parts, conceivably a limit may be reached, and it is that limit that may truly be described as pure Being or Existence as such. It will stand for the last stage of Reality, beyond which analysis cannot go; for across the boundary

or border of Reality, as a humorist put it, lay the spectre of Nothing which was bound to devour the analytic mind.

Even if this account of the origin of belief in Existence, as such, is disputed on the ground that Reality cannot be divided or that there is no such thing as degrees of Reality, it may be suggested that the notion of an elementary Reality may arise as a result of the application of the technique of doubting, as we have seen in the course of analysing the Cartesian position. The background of the last instance of doubt might easily give rise to the notion of pure Being or Existence as such, and we have already seen what this background is like.

Neither of these two accounts of the origin of belief in Existence, however, could be trusted to clear the issue as to the nature of Existence, whether it was a subject or a predicate. The main difficulty would still remain. The accounts could be taken simply as an evidence as to how human mind, in the course of its long evolution, came to believe in the notion of existence, and to talk and think about existence just as it thinks and talks about Nothing, or Relation, or Particulars, etc. That is not exactly explaining or proving with evidence that existence is a subject or predicate.

And in any case we are not in a position to conclude whether Existence is a subject or a predicate. And the main reason for drawing that conclusion is that as yet we have no consistent theory of subject and predicate. So long as we continue to distinguish the subject from the predicate on the ground that while the predicate implies or means common character the subject means its direct opposite, the unique or peculiar, we cannot expect a decision on the question whether existence is a subject or predicate. We may go on persuading ourselves that Existence as such is the most elementary predicate, or the most primal or elementary reality, but that would not solve the problem of existence, as such.

Speculative history, as we all know, holds on record the

attempt to distinguish between the idea of substance or subject or the particular and the idea of existence, as such. It was thought possible to ask the question whether God exists, or the proton exists, or the stark, bare particular exists. The assumption was that if the question happened to be answered in the Negative, we should still find the terms "God," "proton," "particular," surviving with some meaning. The issue was not necessarily the issue of the distinction between subjective and objective Reality. The question did not necessarily mean whether the idea of perfection, or proton, or particular corresponded to something objective; whether, in other words, there was not only a God to feel or imagine or think about, but also a God whom we could approach either for forgiveness for our sins, or for our daily bread. At bottom the question also was, whether we could draw a line between existence, as such, and something else. The hidden implication of this enquiry was that even if existence is dissociated as a predicate from God, proton, and particular, there would still be something left which corresponded to the identity or meaning of these three terms.

Besides, it seems to be obvious that if the predicate has to be distinguished from the subject in the way tradition has so far done, it is impossible not to make of Existence, as such, the ultimate and the most fundamental of all predicates. The fact is that the human mind has been literally in a dilemma: (*a*) it could not get rid of the belief in the subject and the predicate; (*b*) it could not, in consequence, help making of existence the ultimate or most fundamental of all predicates.

It need not be understood, however, that we do not accept in the main the traditional conception of the distinction between subject and predicate, or particular and universal, or percept and concept. We do accept not only these distinctions but all the other distinctions, e.g. classification, characterization, etc., which have been raised upon them. But we do not accept the traditional interpretation of these terms or methods. Our view of percept and concept, or particular and

universal is altogether different from that of tradition or contemporary thought. We propose to suggest fresh theories, not only about them but about the main issues, knowledge, judgement and predication, on which the fortunes of all these issues naturally depend. It is only after our own interpretation on all these issues has been fully known that the truth and force of our comment on the traditional notion of existence can be truly seen. It may not be altogether difficult after that to accept our view that existence is not and cannot be a predicate in any sense of the term.

But does it follow that because we reject the theory of existence as a predicate, we have to accept the Eleatic conception of existence—Existence or Being is another name for Reality? Have we to hold like the Eleatics that existence is a subject or substance? It may be pointed out at once that the notion of subject, as distinguished from the predicate, is just as meaningless to us as the notion of predicate, so far as the traditional interpretation of these two notions is concerned. We have to discard the interpretation of both the notions. Neither subject nor predicate exists for us in the form or with the sense tradition has attached to them. As we shall show later on, both tradition and contemporary thought went quite wrong in their theory of judgement or predication; that even while the notion of relation or related terms came up for discussion with them, there was no foundation in fact for the view that was taken of them.

The Eleatic conception, therefore, shall be treated by us as a metaphysical issue pure and simple, and by no means as a mere logical one. The question before us is whether existence can be identified with Reality as such, and not whether it can be either the subject or predicate of a proposition. And if we hold with the Eleatics that existence is another name for Reality the question would arise, where would our difference from the Eleatics lie if there is a difference at all? The answer is that our difference will mainly arise on the ground of our conception of Reality. Let us explain.

Evidently there is a considerable difference between our conception of Reality and that of tradition and contemporary thought. For instance, we do not make such distinctions as ultimate and proximate Reality, as the whole of tradition did; nor do we believe in what tradition described as permanent or eternal Reality, or temporal or changeful Reality. To us, the only distinction conceivable is that which exists between what we have described as Reality in the actual state and Reality in its possible state. We have taken great pains to show that it is that distinction which forms the bedrock of our thought; and we might repeat again that both the actual and the possible states of Reality are equally essential and necessary. In other words, the outstanding feature of our thought is that Reality alternates between its actual and possible states; and we have no reason to be doubtful about its truth as it was an injunction we derived from the Law of Contradiction itself on the claims raised by the result of a systematic doubt.

Is it possible, then, that our view of existence as a metaphysical Reality can be taken as only a repetition of the Eleatic view? Can we possibly be suspected to mean by Reality the same thing as the Eleatics meant by it? And if we do not, what, after all, is Existence to us? How does our view of it compare with the Eleatic view?

Unlike the Eleatics and every other school of thought which did not look upon Existence, as such, as a predicate, we do not identify the notion of existence with the notion of Reality. On the contrary, it is both possible and necessary for us to distinguish the notion of existence from the notion of Reality. In so far as we believe in what we have described as the two states or stages of Reality, Actual and Possible, there is no reason why we should hesitate to call the possible state by the name of existence. The term Reality may be preserved for what we have called Actual Reality, and the realm of possibilities may be described as the realm of Existence. The term "Existence," therefore, is only another name for the

structure and frame of the universe which brings about the neutralization of the Negative. That is our main position.

We may repeat again that we do not mean by existence anything else, least of all bare being or elementary Reality, for there can be no such thing. As we have already pointed out, the idea of bare Being implies the idea of bare Nothing and as such is a contradiction in terms. In so far as its validity and legitimacy could consist only in excluding absolute Nothingness, its bareness is comparable to the blank emptiness of the Negative alone. We cannot think that the Hegelian dictum was not after all a mere heroic. In fact, there was no reason why the conception of bare being should have been evolved or treated with so much seriousness as to embarrass even the divine claim. If, however, such an obvious waste could not be avoided, the explanation of that waste would be found in the theory of predication that we have so far cultivated. It seems to be a simple truth that as we could not devise any scheme of explanation or description of the fact, other than that of taking it as somehow a complex of the predicate and the subject, we had to believe in "Existence" as the most fundamental of all predicates. We had to discuss whether anything was existent exactly as we had to discuss whether John was an engineer or master-builder. Perhaps we were aware that it led us to the absurd position where we had to distinguish existence not only from non-existence or nothing, but also from what we call the subject or particular or percept. It will be stupid to suggest that we did not realize that we had no chance at that rate of distinguishing between the particular or the subject and the Negative. But nobody suggested that Aristotle might not have told us the whole truth about predication, or that Kant after all was not sacrosanct in his declaration about synthetic judgement. To that simple fact the genesis of the whole theory of existence as a predicate could be traced.

CHAPTER VIII

FREEDOM AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

Analysis of the structure in which the characteristic feature of existence is realized—a preliminary account of the universe—derived from an analysis of two well-known terms, "Freedom" and "Necessity"—review of Freedom and Necessity—conclusion about the structure of the universe from the nature of Freedom and Necessity—the universe is both continuous and discontinuous, or free and fixed—difference between our view of the universe and the traditional view—what simultaneity and succession mean in our account of the universe—the terms "continuous" and "discontinuous" not unfamiliar in traditional history—the mathematical notion analysed—denial of the continuous by the empiricist—analysis of the denial.

If existence, then, is another name for the contrary of the Negative, and if the contrary of the Negative must provide for continuous and perpetual happening of events, as well as unlimited possibilities of achievement, could we find out the structure which can realize them both? Could we find out the "existent" in the actual, precise form where it must be working out both the ends? We are now entering into an enquiry as to the structure of the universe, the one we deal with as thinkers and practical men. We do not propose to deal with it at length, we shall just try to lay down the outline of it.

We shall start with an analysis of two terms well known in the history of speculative thought, Freedom and Necessity. Our expectation is that these two terms if closely analysed will lead the way to a construction of that structure.

As far as we know, the meaning of these two terms could be easily distinguished by considering the notion of alternatives as traditionally understood. Necessity, it is universally accepted, implies the absence of alternatives, while

freedom implies just the reverse, we mean the presence of alternatives. We will take an example. If a comet, for instance, appeared on a particular day in the Indian sky, it would be regarded as an instance of a necessary event, if it could not have appeared on any other day or in any other sky, and if no other event could have appeared in its place. On the other hand, if on that particular day the comet or anything else could have appeared—for instance, a star that promised to the Indian people immunity from foreign exploitation or conquest, or a new god or goddess to add to the expanding pantheon of the Hindus—that would constitute an instance of the free event. In a universe which is ruled by the rigour of necessity, what will happen is fixed and certain, and the possibilities that are conceivable live and die as possibilities. On the other hand, the universe which is free is bound by no such fixity or certainty. The possibilities have as full chances in it as they could conceivably have.

But this apparently clear interpretation of the notion of alternatives may not quite bring out its full significance. We have to explain further what is meant by possibilities, fixity and certainty. It does not seem that the distinction as mentioned above is clear enough, though it has the support of the whole of speculative tradition behind it. Even if it may be easier to follow the meaning of Necessity as it is laid down here, the idea of Freedom so far known requires much more detailed analysis. And that analysis can be made by an examination of two or more definite views as to the meaning of Freedom. We shall deal with the following:

(*a*) Freedom consists in the choice between alternatives; for instance, human will is free if it can choose between two opposite courses of action, evenly balanced. An event, again, will be regarded as free if it represents one of two possible events which are direct opposites.

(*b*) Freedom consists in choosing out of a fixed number of alternatives—for instance, if the human will can find opportunities to choose out of a number of alternatives, instead of being determined to act in a fixed definite

way, it might be considered free. Similarly an event which represents one out of a number of possible events differing from each other will be regarded as free.

(*c*) Freedom consists in a choice out of infinite possibilities, for instance, Leibniz's God chose the world that we live in as the best of all possible worlds.

We need not go into a detailed discussion of these views as in some form or other we shall have to deal with them at length later on. As regards the first view, it will be enough to point out that it stands practically condemned in the history of thought. If alternatives appear as a matter of fact in the relation of opposites or incompatibles, the choice between them will or can have no meaning. For neither of them, as a matter of fact, can be made to prevail over the other by reason of their evenly balanced strength. Either both of them would have to be realized or neither of them; and it is evident that their mutual opposition is a fatal bar to their mutual realization. The death of the Ass of Buridan was the best epitaph ever written on the fate of opposing and incompatible alternatives. And that death meant nothing less than the demise of caprice or chance, to the infinite relief of the universe.

Still, we do not deny that every age had its own bold speculators who persisted in claiming that what is called indeterminate choice, whatever its logical difficulty, has to be preserved in the interest of social good. If we have to have recourse to the technique of punishment to preserve the balance of our social order we have to discover a theory of free will. We cannot simply punish a man or woman for an act that was clearly unavoidable. It is only the theory or conviction that our acts follow from free choice, that we can not only distinguish between right and wrong but also choose between right and wrong, even though they may be opposites, that can justify our technique of punishment. How could a man or woman be punished unless the acts for which they were punished were theirs, freely chosen?

There were other thinkers who continued to believe in

the freedom of the will if only because they could not help believing in it. Either it was a case for pathology or of mystic exaltation. Philosophy really and truly had nothing whatever to do with it as it was not an experience which could be logically treated.

And it was only a variant of this type which refused to believe that man or woman could ever accept the creed or theory that the future was all fixed and planned out. Their conviction was that there was such a thing as human will which is bound to prevail in the future, even if it could not quite assert itself for some thousands or millions of ages. They forgot to notice that the striving that followed from such a claim to free will produced no less harm than good, like the apathy or indifference which followed from the opposite view. The claim to free will has survived as a hypothesis. If it was not altogether dropped, the real reason was that the human mind was much too shrewd to drop it when obviously its direct opposite did not produce any better result. Still, on the whole, both opinion and practice seem to have kept more closely to the view of necessity than of free will, except when it accidentally paid better to be dictatorial and ride roughshod over beliefs and creeds.

For ourselves, it is not possible that we should hang on to a theory of freedom as a mere hypothesis or as a device for dictatorial ambition. We simply have to reject the idea or theory of freedom as chance or caprice or indeterminate choice. And we can only add that this fateful step need not drag us down to the depth of crude fatalism. The fact is that we happen to believe in neither view, as will be more and more clear as we go on.

The second view of freedom, again, it seems to us, has hardly stronger evidence or reason to support it. It is quite conceivable that an event might follow as one out of a fixed number of possibilities. But that happening would still be a case of fixity or necessity. The distinction between freedom and necessity, if it is to be preserved at all, ought not to be

confused with the distinction between two types of fixity or certainty. The difference or distinction in question is not one of degree but one between incompatibles. An event which happens as the only fixed and necessary event is just as fixed and necessary as the event which happened out of a fixed number, it may be two or three or any number. So long as certainty and fixity remain in any shape or form, the chances for freedom are ruled out altogether. One may very well conceive, on the other hand, that a universe which is ruled by law or necessity will have to provide for all conceivable types of fixity and necessity.

Speculative history has no doubt confused the distinction between different types of fixity with the distinction between freedom and necessity. The controversy on the question of freedom and necessity in the ethical sphere will alone bear sufficient testimony to that confusion. Self-determination has been cheerfully assumed by many thinkers of repute as a case of genuine freedom, though there was in it a definite claim of determination by the self. In the scientific sphere, the theory of probability or chance seems to be very nearly a case of the same confusion. It is a case where fixity, definiteness and necessity are assumed to be working hand in hand with incalculability.

There is no reason why different types of fixity and certainty should not be distinguished but it does not follow that fixity may with any reason be identified or associated with freedom. They are incompatible with one another and as such must be kept rigidly separate and distinct. The universe which is ruled by law and necessity cannot possibly belong to the same order of reality as the universe which is essentially free and has alternatives open to it.

When we come to the third view of freedom it seems to repeat the difficulty of the first, in so far as it implies a choice between alternatives and in addition creates a fresh difficulty. Its chief feature is that it upholds boldly the possibility of choosing the Negative. If the alternatives are spread

out over an infinite range it is not merely caprice that gets a chance of realization but literally also what has been known as the dark Negative. If alternatives are not confined to the incompatibles or the opposites, if, on the contrary, they are allowed to comprehend limitless possibilities, it is inconceivable how the Negative can be kept out of their range. In other words, the free person or will which can be credited with the capacity to choose out of infinite possibilities, must be supposed to be in a position to annihilate the whole of existence by its free choice.

Whether this clean achievement would justify human freedom or add to human security is not the point at issue; whether, again, Nothing can be the result of any activity it should be perfectly easy to answer. If at any rate, it seems to be patent enough that whatever else can result from any choice, however free, Nothing cannot result from it, it should be extremely difficult to see what significance can be attached to infinite alternatives.

One can try to understand the notion of alternatives, even though it may not appear to be consistent in its traditional meaning. But is it possible that one can follow what is meant by incompatibles with the superfluous predicate of limitlessness added on to it? The two terms "possibility" and "infinity," if we consider them separately, are difficult enough. Honestly, we do not quite understand either of them in the sense in which they have been understood by tradition. But do they become any the less difficult to follow if we join them merely in linguistic union?

So far as we are concerned, the only meaning that we can ever attach to them lies in the inexplicable possibility of choosing the Negative and thereby giving a quietus to all existence. And as that meaning apparently is neither desirable for the human race nor easily conceivable to the human understanding, there is no reason why we should so resolutely tie up with it the prospects of human freedom.

It may be incidentally mentioned that if the god of Leib-

niz did actually choose to provide a habitat for the human race, it may be supposed that he must have chosen according to a definite standard. Besides, his standard must have been the highest conceivable, or the world in which we live could not have been the best of all possible worlds. Neither the Infinite nor alternatives, it may be safely argued, could have had very much to do with that peculiarly German conception of divine selection. On the contrary, it must have been a perfectly straightforward choice. At any rate, we do not see in it any trace of either caprice or a mad ambition to annihilate the universe. There is not the slightest resemblance in Leibniz's god to god Shiva of the Hindu pantheon, if we know Shiva or the Nordic Divinity by any chance.

It follows, therefore, that none of the views of freedom that we know of seem to be sufficiently clear or altogether defensible; and it is open to us now either to drop the discussion of the whole question of freedom and necessity or to suggest, if possible, a fresh view of them. We shall with courage choose the second course and begin immediately to trace the genesis of the theory of freedom and necessity that appeals to us as sound.

We shall start with a broad reference to the realm of possibility where, it seems to us, the question of freedom and necessity must belong if they belong anywhere. We have already discussed the nature of this realm, though in a very broad way.

Yet the chief reason why we think we should go back to the analysis of that realm is that whatever these terms "Freedom" and "Necessity" might mean, their nature and character is bound to be determined by the nature and character of that realm. It ought to be possible for us not only to exclude the mistaken notion about freedom and necessity but also to discover the strictly accurate one, if we know for certain what exactly the realm of the possible stood for.

The theory or doctrine of indeterminate choice, to begin

with, is easily and at once disproved, and that for the simple reason that the realm of possibilities has a strictly definite end to realize. There could not possibly be in such a realm any "person" or "will" who or which might in any sense be supposed to have the capacity to choose between alternatives; for the fatal choice might fall inadvertently on the very alternative which excluded the realization of that end. Similarly, the mad freedom which entailed the possibility of even the annihilation of the universe could not thrive in it easily, as it was a very sane universe, with not only a central end but a universal law to guide its course. As a matter of fact, there can be no room for the free will or the free person of tradition in that universe.

It does not, however, follow that this realm is just exactly the heaven of the determinist or what his long dream in the course of ages painted, so scrupulously free from anything but the rigour of law and necessity. On the contrary, it is precisely such a realm as the realm of possibilities which can make provision as much for true freedom as for law and necessity. And if we want to see in what way exactly that provision is made, it might be useful if we just discussed the meaning of such notions as fixed end or purpose, alternatives, etc. Let us proceed.

It is well known that tradition has made a clear distinction between choice that follows the path of alternatives and choice that follows the path that is directly opposed to it, that of rigour and authority. It is also known that it has definitely associated both fixity and limitation with the choice which is determined by standard and end. Freedom of any kind was supposed to be conscientiously ruled out if the standard or the end prevailed. Somehow a conception of end or purpose or standard has been inextricably bound up with the conception of fixity, order and limitation.

This tradition was not right about the meaning of choice. We have already shown that choice between alternatives has no meaning. We may suggest now that there can be no

occasion for such a choice. And the reason for this rather strange suggestion is that alternatives do not appear or exist in a form which may admit of being treated by a choosing will.

No person or will ever had to face alternative courses of action, except when he or it had been overwhelmed by doubt; we say this with firmness and conviction. So long as any sense of certainty or definiteness characterized the person or will, the course of action was bound to be definite, singular, and certain. The person or will under consideration was expected to know exactly what course of action he or it was called upon to take. There is no sense in saying that man or woman ever stood facing opposite courses of action, and yet retained his or her integrity as conscious individuals, without being overcome by doubt.

Yet it does not follow that the course of action which a person or will is called upon to choose may not have its contrary or the opposite as it is called. It will be a mistake even to imply that there can be no such thing as opposites or incompatible courses of action. The fact certainly is that there are clear cases of contrary or mutually exclusive courses of action, and we see no reason why we should deny that fact.

But it is simply not true that opposites or incompatible courses of action do or can appear before the same person or will; on the contrary, as far as we know, they appear in two different and separate centres or instances of will and person. What happens invariably is that the "persons" or "wills" to whom these contrary courses appear are necessarily in a state of conflict or clash. It is exactly this clash and conflict between them that brings the contraries into play. So that the simultaneous presence of contrary courses of action or alternatives is only another name for the fact that two persons or wills are in opposition, with two conflicting courses of action to pursue.

Whether this theory of conflict or alternatives is clear

enough to our readers is not for us to say. To us it is the only conceivably true account of alternatives, and we hold it for all it is worth. But it is not possible that it can be made much clearer before we have discovered at least the nature of conflict and harmony in terms of percept and concept. As a matter of fact, not till we have laid down our whole theory of knowledge could we expect to give any clearer account of it. Let it be understood, however, that we are here making two distinct points:

(*a*) That opposite courses of action or alternatives do not appear before the same person or will; they appear, on the contrary, before two separate persons and wills who and which must necessarily be in a state of conflict and opposition.

(*b*) That the occasion for choosing between them cannot possibly arise as the function or capacity of choosing is supposed to belong to one integral person.

And if it is asked why this simple truth was clean missed by tradition, it might be suggested that a distinction was not made by it between what is called oscillation of courses of action and presence of alternatives. It is a fact that the same person may and does alternatively entertain different and even alternative courses of action. But that does not mean that he has to face alternative courses of action.

If we now turn to the conception of choice according to a definite end, tradition, it would appear, was equally mistaken in its claim that such a choice was bound to imply deficiency or limitation of will. It is well known that the absence of alternatives has been supposed to be another name for deficiency and limitation. It has been argued *ad nauseam* that where our choice is fixed by a definite end, where we have no chance of exceeding the limit that is definitely set by that end, we stand necessarily limited and deficient. It was only the unlimited and omnipotent will that was not bound to pursue and follow any definite and fixed course of action, as it had unlimited possibilities out of which to choose.

We have already shown, that the notion of unlimited possibilities is altogether meaningless. It will be our care to show now that the will or person, who or which acts according to an end or standard, can never be either deficient or limited. Deficiency and limitation, it may be confidently asserted, if they mean anything at all, do not apply to action.

Let us begin with an analysis of what is meant by an end.

We have seen in the course of our analysis of alternatives that it was only in the case of conflict or opposition between persons and wills that contrary or alternative courses of action do and can appear. We have also seen that what happens necessarily as a result of this conflict is that neither of the two courses of action is realized. The inevitable consequence of conflict between courses of action is uncertainty or doubt about them which leads in the end to their mutual extinction. So that it can never be held that a standard is or can be realized where opposition and conflict appear.

Where, then, is it that we realize an end? What happens when we do realize it?

We realize an end when we are not in conflict but in harmony, and if we want to know what happens in harmony, we should try to find out what realization of an end implies.

As in the case of alternatives at least two wills or persons are involved, so equally in the case of the realization of an end more than one will or person is involved. For instance, if both John and Smith must entertain desires or courses of action which must clash before the case of alternatives can arise, John and Smith must co-operate or complement each other before the case of an end or standard can arise. In no other way can the realization of an end be achieved. For the fact is that what is meant by end or standard represents but the common purpose which co-operation and

harmony between John and Smith must necessarily imply. We have to distinguish the separate actions of John and Smith from the end and common purpose which their joint action is meant to achieve. Realization of the end means something quite different from the performance of the actions which John and Smith are supposed to perform. The end is not constituted by the separate actions, and the performance of them is not what should be called realization of end.

But can it be held that there is or ever can be any sign or trace of deficiency or limitation in our action if this theory of end or standard is taken for granted?

If the choice according to end is bound to take this form, as we have affirmed that it does, is there any point in suggesting that it is or can be either efficient or deficient?

It is conceivable no doubt that an end or standard in question might be contrasted or compared with many other ends or standards which were being pursued at the same time. If, for instance, John and Smith are found to pursue a common purpose or end, Lindsay and Marett may be equally found pursuing some other purpose or end. In fact, one could draw up a list or make an inventory of multiple ends and standards by exploring the field of human existence. And if it is found that while John and Smith are pursuing a definite purpose they cannot at the same time pursue some other purpose which, for instance, Lindsay and Marett are pursuing, would that mean that they must unquestionably be deficient? If we take it for granted that these four individuals are unique persons, and if we believe that they can be shown to be in definite relationships with one another, whether of conflict or harmony or similarity, what do we gain by the suggestion that they are all equally deficient? Is it implied that they must be deficient if only because they cannot impersonate one another and maintain their integrity too? And if by any chance the miracle did happen and they did achieve both ends, would

that miracle follow the line of the laws of thought? What is it that we really mean?

It does not seem at all possible that even as a hypothesis an unlimited person or will can be trusted to serve safely as the centre in which all ends and standards, irrespective of their remoteness and difference, could appear. There may be an unlimited mind or infinite mind which could be contrasted with the finite or the limited. But neither of them would or could bear the predicate of efficiency or deficiency for a fact. The most that could be said about them is that they would function just to realize the central end of the realm of possibility and that in their own original and specific ways.

What then is our position with regard to the traditional view about the two forms of choice: (*a*) choice between alternatives; (*b*) choice according to end and standard?

We have discarded choice between alternatives as a fiction. We have equally discarded the notion that choice according to end must mean deficiency or limitation. Our position is, that if we closely analyse the nature of conflict and harmony where alone "choices" take place, we shall find that the human will never chooses the alternative, nor does it suffer from any deficiency or limitation while it realizes its ends.

What happens, as a matter of fact, is that conflicts and co-operations between human wills take place. In the case of conflict, where the alternatives appear, it is mutual extinction of the opposite ends that takes place. In the other case, where the complements appear it is realization of the common purpose that is bound to follow. The human will is neither free nor limited. It either falls into a state of doubt and uncertainty or it realizes belief and certainty. Nothing else happens. There is no reason to hold that the one is a state of freedom while the other is a state of deficiency.

It does not follow however that it is impossible that the distinction between freedom and necessity can be retained

in any sense whatsoever. On the contrary, there is no reason to suppose that tradition was altogether wrong in conceiving of freedom or necessity or both. In fact if we analyse the nature of the realm of possibility a little more closely we shall see that both the terms have a meaning.

In so far as that realm is bound to be both continuous and discontinuous there is no reason why we should not define freedom in terms of its continuous character, and necessity and fixity in terms of its discontinuous character. And it need not be difficult to maintain that its discontinuous and continuous features follow directly from the fact that it has to provide for perpetuity. The point to note is that the realm of possibility, in so far as it must represent all conceivable forms of existence, must be capable of both continuing without a stop and discontinuing with a stop. There must be processes in it which make for perpetuity or the continuous or perpetual happening of events, as well as processes which make for the bounded and fixed succession of events. As the two processes are bound to be different, there must be room enough for both in that realm.

The term "freedom" may be used as a predicate or feature of the constituents of the continuous universe. It may be taken to mean that the events that take place in the continuous part make for the perpetual continuance of the realm of possibility. If the realm does not come to an end, it is because it has the capacity of continuing which means functioning freely.

Similarly the terms "fixity" and "rigidity" may be used as a predicate for the constituents of the discontinuous universe. It will mean that the events and actions that will take place in the discontinuous part make for the discontinuance of the realm of possibility. If the realm has to pass through the process of beginning and coming to an end, it is because it has the capacity of discontinuance, which means functioning in a fixed and rigid way.

But what is the bearing of this account of freedom and

necessity on the structure of the realm of possibility? How does it elucidate or formulate its outline or structure?

It will be remembered that we undertook the analysis of freedom and necessity for the purpose of elucidating the form and outline of the realm of possibility.

The obvious conclusion that follows from this analysis is that the realm of possibility is by no means one compact universe or one systematic whole. And it makes no difference whether it is drawn from our analysis of the notions of freedom and necessity or from the fact or feature of perpetuity. There is nothing to choose between freedom and fixity on the one hand and the continuous and discontinuous on the other. They are different names for the same stage or phase of the realm of possibility as we have mentioned above. And we have to derive them both from the same source.

But the point to note is that whether we call these phases by the name of the free and fixed or the continuous and discontinuous, we have to conclude that the structure of the realm of possibility as it is indicated by them is not what tradition on the whole has taken it to be. The realm is not one systematic whole in which all the moments and parts hang together. And we shall presently see that the realm is not one whole and compact universe but practically three universes which do not and cannot simultaneously exist. The free and the continuous phase, as we analyse it more closely, will be found to constitute two universes while the fixed and discontinuous phase will be found to constitute one universe. And one of the main features of all these universes is that they succeed each other instead of existing and functioning together.

But we have not had any evidence as yet for all these statements about the structure of the realm of possibility. So far we have only stated that our position that the realm of possibility is not one compact series marks a clear departure from the traditional view. The evidence will be

adduced as we go on developing our position. In the meantime we may incidentally mention that our view about the universe, if it is true, will leave no ground for the well-known controversies about the Infinite and Finite, or the free and fixed, with reference to their simultaneous appearance in the same universe. The belief that we have not to deal with the self-same universe as one compact universe, but with two or three universes which succeed each other, is a sufficient proof that the controversies were artificial.

We may also mention that the notion of simultaneity does not drop out altogether simply because the three universes succeed one another. Both the discontinuous and continuous universes which must be multiple and pluralistic, or simple and monistic, have to make room for simultaneity just as much as for succession. What cannot be simultaneous but must be successive are the Infinite and Finite, or the free or the fixed, or the continuous and discontinuous. But it does not follow that because they succeed each other they cannot represent both simultaneity and succession within their own specific spheres. They do.

It will be a mistake to suggest, however, that tradition did not draw a line between what we have called the continuous and discontinuous phases of the realm of possibility. At any rate, Immanuel Kant not only divided Reality between Noumenon and Phenomenon but sharply distinguished between the ideas of reason and the categories of understanding. It will be our special care to deal with Kant later on, to show the bearing of the Kantian distinction on our position. There is another instance again, where this distinction between the continuous and discontinuous was very sharply felt, we mean the strange claim of the mathematician that the lease of life of a numerical series can be prolonged either by natural or artificial means. We shall just for a moment analyse this claim very briefly.

On the face of it it sounds rather strange that the mathematician, with his traditional credit for acuteness, should

have thought that a mere numerical series possessed the natural capacity of absorbing an endless addition to its normal proportion. And the suggestion that the mathematician himself was gifted enough to be perpetually there, to force the expansion of the series by adding the figure one to it if it refused to move of its own accord, does not improve the evidence. The theory of the infinite series which made such assumptions necessary seems to suffer from the same acute difficulty as we are familiar with in connection with the philosophic view.

But there can be no question about the fact that the mathematician took both the continuous and the discontinuous as valid and legitimate features of the universe. The simple truth is that he must have somehow believed in them both. There would be no occasion for him to cultivate the practice of adding one to a series if the series in question did not discontinue. On the other hand, there would be no point in his making an attempt to continue the series if he honestly believed that the notion of the continuous was inconceivable.

As a matter of fact, our difficulty with the mathematician does not arise with regard to his belief in the notion of the continuous and the discontinuous. He was perfectly justified in thinking that there was and ought to be room enough for both the continuous and the discontinuous. Where he distinctly went wrong was in assuming that what was discontinuous by its nature could be made continuous by natural or artificial means. The fact is that, like so many others, he too seems to have believed that the distinction between the continuous and the discontinuous was the same as was held to exist between the limited and the unlimited. The discontinuous according to him was a part of the continuous; it was really the continuous in its necessarily incomplete and unformed distress.

We, on the contrary, hold that the continuous and the discontinuous are totally independent of each other and can

by no means be supposed to belong to the same universe. We are positive that we cannot deduce the discontinuous from the continuous, nor is it possible to reduce the continuous to the discontinuous. If we have to deal with them we have to deal with them separately, never forgetting that they are unique and self-sufficient. We do justice to neither if we confuse them by any chance.

Perhaps one of the causes, it may be mentioned by the way, which led our empiricists to deny the continuous altogether was their keen perception that the continuous and the discontinuous were so sharply divided. It might have appeared patent to them that they could not be safely accommodated within the same universe.

To this conclusion, again, it was fated that they should come, as they further believed that the universe that we have to deal with is constituted by the particulars alone. It was inconceivable that such a universe where the fact or the existent, whether it was mathematical, physical, or mental, was bound to begin and end, should be continuous. There was an absolute decree that whatever happened in it must have had a beginning and end. Even if the mathematical practice of continuing a series takes place in this universe, that practice too must have a beginning and an end. The continuous, in the sense of never-ending perpetuity, was to the empiricist, like "relation" or "universal," a contradiction in terms. There was only one world or universe, and that world was from beginning to end instinct with the spirit and law of the discontinuous.

We have genuine sympathy with this empiricist view in so far as it honestly suggests that the universe that we directly and immediately deal with is a discontinuous universe from top to bottom. We agree that historically we never had any other universe with which to deal.

But it is difficult to see why one should dogmatize that it was the only conceivable universe that there could be. It seems unnatural that the empiricist, whose one claim to

recognition lies in pointing out that the nature of fact consists in its particularity, should make statements which directly exceed the limit of the particular. It is one thing to say that what we observe or experience as we live from moment to moment is strictly and scrupulously particular; quite another thing to assert that nothing but the particular can be a fact or exist.

There must be all the less reason, again, for holding such a view if it is a fact that what we observe as a particular has a distinct reference, either to other particulars which we do not and cannot observe, or to facts which cannot be described as particulars. Perhaps there might have been a case for the empiricists if the fact of "references" were not a fact. But is it possible that one could do away with reference even though it is a fact?

One can certainly refuse to believe that the feature of reference which every instance of observation possesses has any value of worth. When, for instance, John has the experience of being chased by a snake, John can, if he likes, refuse to believe that there was an objective world with a snake in it which was at that moment not in a particularly agreeable mood or attitude towards John. But such a refusal, apart from creating further complications with regard to John's chances of escape from imminent peril, will leave no ground under the feet of John's claim that he had at the moment the experience of being chased by a snake. The point is that if we reject any feature or phase of our present experience we stand to lose the whole of that experience. If we make up our mind that we shall not accept anything which is not present, it follows that we cannot at least reject what is present. The feature of reference is directly a part of the present experience. It has the same value or validity as any other feature.

We cannot argue again that the feature of reference has no value because it refers to something which falls outside the experience which was present. That would be arguing that

an experience which should be accepted as valid must not only be present but also must not refer to anything else. But would it not be odd to complain that there should be any feature of reference in any experience where there is such a feature?

Yet there would be some point in such an argument if it were a fact that one could find, as a matter of fact, at least some experience which did not refer to something else. The celebrated instance of what is called immediate experience which is supposed to be scrupulously clean of any contamination with the objective world is pure fiction or a mere hypothesis of the empiricist's position. It is beyond the range of verification, which as a method not even the most advanced of empiricists would disown. How could it then serve the purpose of an argument in a controversy? It can only be cherished as an article of faith. And if we discard the immediate experience, there is no experience with which we can deal or which forms the subject matter of debates and controversies which does not actually "refer." How, then, is it possible that our refusal to believe that there is such a thing as reference in every experience will invalidate the fact of reference?

Perhaps it might be useful at this stage to allude briefly to the position we hold about the nature of experience as such. It might help us to see why and how the attempt of the empiricist to disavow reference as a feature of what he calls the present and immediate or given was fundamentally wrong. The account is bound to be incomplete and may sound crude but it may help to clear the ground, though the evidence for the account can be given only at a later stage.

We shall begin with an illustration. If we want to know what John, for instance, is at any moment, we shall have to keep in mind the fact that John has to be either in conflict or harmony with some other individual centre, whether that centre is human like John, or not human like a cow or

a tree or a mountain. No individual centre can exist or function except in a relation of conflict or harmony with some other individual centre. That is the first point we should note and we can give sufficient evidence for it.

The second point to remember is that while John is in conflict, say, with Smith, both John and Smith will imply or presuppose some event or fact which was no longer a fact because it was past and gone. The conflict between John and Smith means that they respectively represent functions or activities with special reference to that particular event in the past. If, for instance, that past fact or event is supposed to be the parliamentary state, John and Smith, while they were in conflict with each other in regard to the parliamentary state, would be respectively attempting to continue or to discontinue the lease of its life. John would appear as a parliamentarian whose one object in life was to preserve the parliamentary state and to defend it against any attack. On the other hand, Smith would appear to be a Fascist, whose one object in life was to destroy the parliamentary state and to establish in its place the Fascist state. The parliamentary state therefore is the common presupposition of the conflict between John and Smith; and this is the second point for which evidence will follow.

The third point to note is that the parliamentary state, which was evidently not existent while the conflict about it was on, must be supposed to have existed somehow as a fact. And if we go a little further with the analysis of the nature of conflict we shall see that the background of a conflict, that which is presupposed as a past event by both the sides, might be supposed to have existed only as the realization of what we call common purpose. The parliamentary state, for instance, might have come into existence only after individual centres had worked together to realize a common political goal. A distinction has to be made between the situation where a number of individual centres

work together to realize a common goal, and the situation where the realization of that common goal exists all by itself. And it is this realization which may come later on to form the background of conflict. As we said, this is the third point to remember and we are prepared to give sufficient evidence for it.

Altogether we have to take into consideration three distinct sets of facts or states before we can fully understand John or Smith or a cow or a tree or a mountain as they exist at any moment. We shall have to remember that John, for instance, comes into clash or enters into co-operation with Smith or anything or anybody. Also, it must be remembered that the relation of harmony between John and Smith or any others, gives rise to an event or fact which we have called by the name of the realization of the common purpose. And it must be specially noted that John exists while he is in conflict or harmony as one individual among other individuals, even as he exists along with Smith and others in a state which is supposed to represent the realization of the common purpose. The term that we shall use later on in our treatise for this state is "unity," (as distinguished from "synthesis" which the great German philosopher used), in so far as this state is to be specified by its absolute simplicity. And it should be noted that in our system, the particular and the individual literally exists in not merely one but two different forms, what we shall describe later as historical and mystical.

And assuming that all that we are saying is true, could we hold that the empiricist was right when he disavowed the fact of reference altogether? Does it not follow, on the contrary, that the empiricist was totally mistaken in his account of the nature of the present or the immediate or the given? We cannot help reminding the empiricist that if he is at all prepared to deal with what he calls the particular he must be prepared also to deal with what the particular refers to. He will find at least that the present refers to a past and a

future necessarily, and, as a matter of fact, the particular will have to be dropped as a meaningless notion if we relieve it of its references altogether.

But all these rather strange claims require to be evidenced at great length, and we promise our readers that they will be fully justified.

As we come to develop our theory of percept and concept in particular we shall have the chance of explaining all these issues much more fully. It will be possible for us to show then that the percept is bound to imply the concept instead of embodying it, exactly as it presupposed what may be called the source or origin of all concept. We beg to be excused for being unavoidably crude and cryptic at this stage.

If the feature of reference, however, has to be taken into consideration, would it not follow at once that the discontinuous universe need not be taken as the only universe in existence? On the contrary, it can be shown easily that the discontinuous universe refers directly to the continuous, with a fatal consequence to the empiricist's position. The fact is that there is as much evidence for the discontinuous as for the continuous, and that evidence can be described as logical or empirical as one likes. We shall soon illustrate this truth.

But before we proceed to discuss the continuous and the discontinuous more fully, we might add by the way that nothing can really, or ought to, serve as evidence which is based on either pure logic and thought, or pure fact and immediacy. Somehow or other both thought and fact must be there working together hand in hand, if we expect to get truth and evidence which is indisputable. For instance, as will appear from the method we have followed, we never argued for the validity of any experience which was not only based upon actual fact but was fully necessitated by thought. We began with Reality as we found it and came to a conclusion about it by the application of thought to it.

The position therefore that we accepted in the end as indisputable grew out of both fact and thought working together. And it is that position in the last analysis which gave us ground for suggesting that there is as much evidence for the discontinuous as for the continuous.

CHAPTER IX

ISSUES OF IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE

The issues that arise out of our claim that the universe is not one compact or coherent system but continuous and discontinuous in succession—the issue of identity and difference or permanence and change—Review of the historical position—our own view, based on our analysis of the laws of thought.

So far we have just described the structure of the realm of possibility in terms of two distinct types of universe: the Free or the Continuous, and the Fixed or the Discontinuous. We have claimed that they do not exist together, nor by any chance form between them one compact or coherent system. The relation between them is strictly one of succession. We shall now proceed to discuss the different issues which arise straight out of this stupendous claim. It is necessary that we should carefully analyse the following issues, which, in some form or other, must be presupposed by our main position.

(*a*) The issue of identity and difference or permanence and change.
(*b*) The issue of the Infinite and the Finite, or the Unlimited and the Limited.

We do not suggest that a discussion of these issues is calculated to give us further information about the realm of possibility or its relative structure. We require a different enquiry for unfolding the constitution of the continuous and the discontinuous universes.

But no such enquiry is logically possible before we have made sure about the validity of the notions of change and difference. In so far as the two universes must necessarily imply change and difference, we have to make it evident that change and difference are perfectly consistent notions

and do not contravene the claim of what has been described as their contraries, i.e. Identity and Permanence.

For instance, the continuous and the discontinuous universes must be pluralistic. Multiplicity, in its simultaneous and successive forms must be supposed to characterize them. In fact the difference between the continuous and the discontinuous universes will, in the main, lie in the way in which multiplicity in its successive form will appear in their history.

But can we accept or reject this claim to pluralistic existence, whether in the simultaneous or successive form, without going into the question of Identity or Difference, or Permanence and Change? On the other hand, if we do succeed in assuring ourselves that change and difference as notions are just as consistent and valid as identity and permanence, can any logical issue still survive about multiplicity or succession? As a matter of fact, one of the most fundamental issues of both thought and practice is the issue of Identity and Difference, or Permanence and Change. And our failure to solve this issue satisfactorily has been mainly responsible for our failure in solving many other issues.

We shall begin our enquiry with a brief reference to a well known historic tradition. That tradition is that we could not quite see how any entity could preserve its identity and at the same time undergo a definite change or become different. The difficulty was that it could not be supposed to become different or to change from what it was originally and primarily, and yet remain identically the same. It was universally assumed that if anything were to be added to the original identity of that entity it was not permitted that the addition should interfere with that integrity. It was expected that it should not diminish or increase the original identity, nor replace or reform it by anything else. The entity in question was supposed to be absolute in its nature, and if change were to occur to it, it could only occur if it did not happen to disturb its pre-existing equanimity. There was nothing wrong with the notion of change or

difference, but equally there was nothing wrong with the notion of permanence or identity. In other words, difference or change as a category was found to be irrational and inexplicable, precisely because it presupposed identity or permanence.

And yet there were philosophers who were not prepared to admit that change and difference, as notions, were inexplicable. Two definite attempts, in consequence, were made to relieve the tension of the anomalous situation created by the conflict between identity and difference or permanence and change. One of them frankly sacrificed permanence to establish change as the sole occupant of existence. Students of history know how in European philosophy the origin of this attempt can be traced to early Greek speculation; and it is by no means difficult to discover its belated repetition in the twentieth century. It does not concern us to discuss the systems that are built on change as such.

The other attempt seemed to be more sedate, as it deliberately had in view the definite object of preserving both permanence and change, in spite of the fact that they did not seem to blend. The dictum "whatever is, is," which was enunciated by the advocates of "Identity and Being," to the exclusion of change, was practically repudiated. It was agreed that whatever the significance of identity or permanence might be, there was no reason why it should be allowed to exclude difference or change altogether. The assumption of those philosophers was that either both permanence and change had to be preserved or neither of them should stay.

The assumption behind this suggestion frankly took its stand on the indisputable experience of both permanence and change. There was the same kind of reasonableness about it as was responsible for the origin of philosophic enquiry itself.

We cannot dispute the validity of the claim that we do have experience which is absolutely impartial about both

permanence and change. If we had not had an experience of both of them, there would be no occasion for us to discover the means of either justifying one of them at the expense of the other, or of recognizing both of them. And once we actually started by recognizing both identity and difference, it followed that we should have to find a way somehow of reconciling them. The extremists in philosophic speculation who chose to sacrifice permanence for change, or change for permanence, did not solve the issue. Like all extremists they sought relief from the tension of compromise which was but extremism in its challenge to truth.

But the actual theories which were formulated to preserve both permanence and change, or identity and difference, did not seem to preserve either of them. For all practical purposes they only created the belief that the clash between Identity and Difference, or between Permanence and Change, was actually solved. We have no hesitation in saying that the theories of "Concrete Universal" and "Identity in Difference" are honest and ingenious attempts to preserve both Identity and Difference. There is something distinctly comprehensive and almost humane about them. But the problem that arose from these two distinct notions was by no means a linguistic problem. Identity and Difference could not be reconciled by simply coining a phrase, "Identity in Difference." A linguistic truce between Identity and Difference when they are frankly incompatible as ideas could mean only an advantage to language.

Besides, the hidden assumption behind this claim that "Identity in Difference" was a matter of fact, and therefore incontestably true, definitely borrowed from the Empiricist's valuation of fact. The Idealists who propounded the theories of "Concrete Universal" or "Identity in Difference" had no right to "Fact" as such, as they had already deliberately established "Thought" in its place.

Besides, it must seem inconceivable that we should come across a single fact representing both Identity and Difference

if it be a fact that as ideas they are truly incompatible with each other. Can it be held that they cease to be incompatible as soon as they leave the plane of ideas and enter the sphere of fact? There have been attempts made to distinguish the plane of ideas and the plane of fact. The distinction between the subjective and objective world will bear testimony to that. In fact, the whole theory of knowledge in which we have been brought up is a direct evidence of that distinction.

But even if this distinction between the plane of fact and the plane of ideas is not objected to, as it ought to be, can it be held that between the region of fact and the region of ideas there is a gulf of difference which is strange enough to transmute incompatibility into compatibility? Does the idea, in being translated to fact, not only change but change from its status and position as contradictory and meaningless to something which is consistent and significant?

The chances are that only if Identity and Difference as ideas were, as a matter of fact, compatible, could we legitimately expect to come across facts corresponding to them. The peculiar entity known as the contradictory is only a dream of some philosophic and most mystic minds. To any mind well stocked with incompatible and contradictory ideas, the world of fact is sure to dwindle almost to nothing.

We have already seen what happens to it when we were passing through the grind of the Cartesian doubt, and it need not be held that human psychology has considerably changed since Descartes' time. Nor is it perhaps true that the world of facts has chosen altogether to follow the line indicated by the mystics of our race.

The conclusion, therefore, is that unless we approach the question of identity and difference, or permanence and change, from a new angle and succeed in discovering a fresh valuation of those notions, we may not come out of the wood where tradition practically lost its path. And we may proceed at once to find out what form that new valuation might take.

Let us analyse what the notion of identity truly means.

We have here to consult the laws of thought strictly as the only authoritative source which can offer us a primary account of it. As a matter of fact, the first law, the law of Identity, seems to deal with nothing else but identity.

The traditional way of conveying its message will be found in the simple symbolic form—A is A. It means that if we assume that there is such an existent as "A," it cannot afford to be anything but "A." A presumption, it seems, arises in connection with all existents that they could be something else, that there was a tendency in them to contradict themselves. We may refer here to the Hegelian dream where the self contradicted itself. What the law of Identity does is simply to rebut that presumption.

And if we ask what is meant by that "something" which any existent may presumably be but is not permitted by the Law of Identity actually to be, it is the Law of Contradiction that gives us the straight answer. That "something" else is the contrary of the existent in question. The message has been put traditionally in the symbolic form, A is A and can not be Not-A.

And between them, these two messages about Identity have given rise to the notion of the contradictory. If we want to put it symbolically, we should put it in the form--A is A and Not-A.

So that from the two laws in our traditional history we have got three distinct notions:

(*a*) The existent.
(*b*) The contrary.
(*c*) The contradictory.

The moment we address ourselves to the question of Identity, we may take it for granted that we shall have to deal with some existent or fact, as well as with its contrary, and maybe the contradictory too.

But what is meant, exactly, by the contrary if we still

choose to follow the direction of the laws? What is Not-A, in so far as it is the contrary of A? How is it related to A?

And here we may seek the aid of the second law exclusively. We are told by the Law of contradiction that A and Not-A are opposites, and also that they cannot both exist.

Evidently, the two statements, if they are taken at their face value, give rise to a contradiction. A and Not-A cannot be opposites if they do not oppose each other as co-existent entities. If they cannot both exist, they cannot oppose each other. The face value, therefore, is not the true value of the statements in question, provided we do not question the wisdom of the Laws. We have already seen, too, where their true value lies. Let us recapitulate.

In the place of the symbolic representation "A," we put Reality, which we had already established as an indisputable truth. We accepted the verdict of the laws and assumed that Reality had its contrary which we took the liberty of describing as "Nothing." It was evident that "Nothing" cannot co-exist with Reality and so the first statement of the Laws was proved to be correct. But "Nothing" as we took pains to prove could very well exist as a possibility; which fact meant that Reality too could co-exist as a possibility. The second statement, therefore, was equally verifiable, precisely because the two possibilities would clash as opposites.

We took the liberty of interpreting the Laws in so far as they emphasized the nature and meaning of the contrary, and it is this interpretation which supported the whole edifice of our philosophic scheme. Let us hope the gods will be propitious and it will never fail us.

But what exactly are the conclusions that follow from this interpretation of the Laws of thought as to the meaning of Identity, especially with regard to the notions of difference and change? Could we believe that the notion of Identity does not exclude the notion of difference and change?

Can we claim that we know exactly what the contrary is? Let us illustrate.

If, for instance, we start with an existent individual, John. Can we at once form an idea as to what the contrary of John is or has to be?

The laws will tell us at once that Not-John is the contrary of John, and if we apply the conclusion of our analysis of the laws of thought to John and Not-John, we shall expect that John and Not-John will not co-exist as actual facts. If John is there, Not-John cannot be there. So that in one sense Not-John is impossible as a fact or existent, if John is a fact or existent already. But by the same laws, John and Not-John must also exist together to oppose one another, which means that they must exist as possibilities in a state of opposition. The term "contrary," therefore, has two senses:

(*a*) The sense in which it represents the direct negative, which cannot exist.
(*b*) The sense in which it is the opposite and stands out as the possible, or the indirect negative.

But what should we understand, then, by the identity of John, if the contrary of John has to be conceded an existential value? And if we can without any difficulty discover John's identity, what part is the notion of difference or change expected to play in it? Will John's identity, as it will turn out under the strict direction of the laws of thought, which gives the contrary, too, a chance to exist, coalesce easily with the notion of difference and change? Will it be easy or even necessary to hold that John, if he is to exist at all, must be capable of being distinguishable or liable to change?

The answer is in the affirmative; and the reason simply is that as the identity of John is bound to appear in two stages and necessarily in succession, difference and change must be directly implied by it. John could not possibly be in two

distinct stages in succession if difference and change were in the nature of things impossible to John. John has to change and undergo differences if the actual and possible stages of John must both be there. On the other hand, there should be no difficulty in John's undergoing the change, as that metamorphosis was indispensable to the identity of John. If it is a fact that John is not a monistic individual, as all philosophers and logicians thought he was; if his nature was to be in two stages or forms in succession instead of one, why should change and difference be strange or even fatal to his identity? The fatality, or enigmatic complication that was created by the notion of change and difference—and quite justly—arose simply because it was not noticed that identity meant dual existence in succession, and not monistic singularity. The whole issue about difference and change, therefore, takes an altogether different form as soon as it is realized that there was such a thing as the stage of possibility where the contrary functions in full existence. Here is a clean departure from the whole of tradition, as we have so often pointed out, and the problem of difference and change simply ceases to exist as a direct result of this departure.

And once the notion of change is sanctioned by the notion of identity, the issue about "permanence" as the custodian of identity instantly drops. It is inconceivable that identity can be another name for permanence if change is directly implied by it. Permanence and change are incompatible terms. Identity cannot be both permanent and capable of undergoing change. And if we have to preserve the notion of change, we have to drop the notion of permanence altogether. The issue of permanence, therefore, will remain only as subject-matter for explanation. We have to explain why the philosophers came to talk about permanence in connection with identity at all.

CHAPTER X

CATEGORIES OF BEING AND BECOMING

Failure of tradition to define our theory of identity—consequent development of the Static and Dynamic schools of thought, with exclusive claims about the categories—Being and Becoming—psychological genesis of the two schools—analysis of the conception of the Negative—distinction between the Negative and the contradictory—features of the Negative—possible reason why the sceptic and the Dynamic schools arose—solution of the time-honoured enigma of Being and Becoming—the root of the confusion about the Negative—analysis of the two notions of Being and Becoming with reference to their psychological genesis—the two notions are meaningless and so the Static and Dynamic schools of thought have no foundation—the categories we put in the place of Being and Becoming—the nature of our system.

We have just seen that change and difference, instead of being excluded by the notion of identity are directly implied by it. Identity is bound to imply change and difference, precisely because it is dual in its character.

But tradition failed to appreciate this simple truth, with the inevitable result that the Static and Dynamic schools of thought arose with exclusive claims on behalf of the two well-known categories, "being" and "becoming"; as if even conceivably they were the only creative or generative principles!

If we read history correctly, difficulties which were both speculative and practical must have driven the human mind early in its career to enquire about the certainty or security of Reality as a safeguard against the void or sinister Negative. It had to ask under acute philosophic stress whether Reality indisputably was, rather than its contrary. And as that fateful adventure meant a close examination of the claims of the Negative, sooner or later the main issue resolved itself into an enquiry into the nature of the Negative. The

question before the human mind at an early stage of speculation was whether the dark Negative was capable of excluding the claim of Reality.

It was directly from this fateful speculation that the celebrated schools of static and dynamic thought arose. It was nothing but the discovery about the features of the Negative that gave rise to the problems connected with identity and difference, or permanence and change.

Let us analyse the Negative.

The notion of the Negative is by far the most complicated notion in human experience, and difficulty about it centred chiefly in its proximity to the contradictory or impossible. It has been definitely held that there is nothing to choose between the Negative and the inconceivable; and one at least of the reasons was that the Negative, the "absence of the Positive," fell beyond the range of perception. In so far as the existent or the positive alone is perceived, the negative could but be only the impossible.

There is reason enough to hold that the Positive not only exists but exists also as a perceived fact, but it does not follow that what is absent or not perceived must be nothing but the inconceivable. Even though human mind never believed that the Negative was actually a fact, it never ceased to dread that the Negative might be a fact and do away with all existence. Human apprehension centred very largely in the possibility that the absolute Negative, or "void," might swallow up any moment the Positive and the existent. The capacity of the Negative to contradict or destroy the Positive was never forgotten.

It will be a mistake to treat the "absent" as if it were equivalent to the impossible—the human mind never seriously had to deal with the impossible. The impossible never was a source of anxious concern to the human mind as evidently the Negative was. If it wanted assurance it was only in connection with the Negative. If indeed it could be shown that an attempt to make the "absent" present, or the negative positive, could but produce the impossible, the

human mind would have cheerfully welcomed such an attempt as a blessing. And after that its proverbial dread of the Negative would have dissipated into an illusion.

There is absolutely no reason to identify the impossible or the contradictory with the Negative.

Equally legitimately it may be claimed that the Negative may exist quite consistently as a conception in the absolute or non-related Reality. Such existence or occurrence of the Negative in the Absolute Reality, if it were a fact, could not either contradict it or minimize its immaculate proportion. It could only prove that the Negative was incapable of co-existing with the Absolute Reality as an absolute fact. It would not prove that the Negative was altogether inconceivable or impossible.

As the humorist might put it, the picture of the peaceful cannibal with the assurance of his enemy being safely inside himself may not be altogether an undignified portrait of Reality, precisely because the enemy inside the cannibal is nothing more significant than an assurance that he is completely finished and done with. The absolute Negative never existed except in the assurance that it could not co-exist with the Absolute, as the dead enemy could not by any chance live alongside of the satisfied cannibal.

Besides, whenever we are vehemently determined to bring to an end the career of our antagonists, we certainly do mean that their "absence" is not only eminently desirable but perfectly conceivable. Nobody would for a moment waste valuable energy over the rather ungainly process of taking human lives if the dark "absence" that followed death were not an article of faith. The issue is not whether it could be dealt with as we deal with what is "present," it is whether it could be an object of human interest.

Yet it is the term "conceivable" which can truly bring out the validity or significance of the Negative; a term which is inapplicable to the contradictory and the impossible.

Traditionally, what is conceivable has been distinguished

as well from "fact" as from the "contradictory," or the impossible. The distinction was made on the ground that the conceivable might or might not lead to a fact. In so far as it was supposed possible that it might lead to a fact, it was not confused with the contradictory or impossible. That is clear and straightforward enough as the impossible can never be a fact. But as it was equally possible that it might not lead to a fact it was distinguished from "fact" which was taken to be absolute in its character.

The Negative, to the traditional view, was conceivable, and therefore neither non-existent or inconceivable. The dread suspicion always prevailed that though it was not a fact, it might be a fact any day or any moment because it was conceivable. The possibility of its being a fact hung there like the sword of Damocles over the head of the human mind.

But it does not follow that the traditional conception of conceivability was sound. The conceivable is no doubt a fact but it is not fact of the kind tradition took it to be. The notion of possibilities in the shape of alternatives which was associated with it had no sense. If the conceivable has to be retained in addition to "fact" and the contradictory, it must be re-defined and exactly in the way in which we have re-defined so many other terms.

What is conceivable is only possible and the state of possibility is just as good an existent state as the state of actuality from which it must be distinguished. Like the Positive, the Negative too exists but it exists only as a possibility. Tradition did not distinguish the two forms of existence, Actual and Possible, and so overlooked the dual character of existence. If the Negative is just possible, it is clearly distinguishable from both the Positive and the contradictory. The Positive exists both as actual and possible. We cannot confuse the Positive with the Negative. Similarly, the Negative is not the contradictory or the impossible, on the ground that the latter cannot exist either as actual or

as possible. The contradictory is just the impossible, the terminus of all thought and activity.

If tradition therefore was perfectly correct in holding that the Negative was conceivable, it failed to formulate the conceivable character of the Negative. It was not the belief in the Negative that went wrong but the formulation of that belief.

If the Negative then should on no account be identified with the contradictory, the question of the features of the Negative can legitimately arise. What is conceivable must be supposed to have features. It is the contradictory with regard to which the question of features cannot arise. If the human mind in its early speculation wanted to make sure about the features of the Negative with a view to safeguarding Reality, it was perfectly justified in doing so. Its dread that the Negative was likely to be a fact might have been altogether groundless as it was based on a false view of conceivability, but there can be no question that its enquiry into the nature of the Negative was perfectly valid. The enquiry was inevitable.

But what possible features could result from the enquiry into the nature of the Negative? Could the features of the Negative be positive, by any chance?

The features were bound to be negative, and as far as we can judge they would consist in two types of non-existence or privation or want:

(*a*) Non-existence or absence of the capacity to act or achieve an end or purpose.
(*b*) Non-existence or absence of the capacity to be distinguished.

It is inconceivable that the Negative can have any identity or positive feature to serve it as a mark of distinctness; nor can we think it might be capable of achieving any end or that anything may happen or be achieved in its career. Whatever our apprehension of it may be, we can say nothing

more about it than that it is Negative and Nothing. We can certainly visualize it by forming pictures which would point to the dismal and harrowing, but in itself it will remain as the void and empty blank nothingness in which nothing positive can thrive.

But did it follow that because the Negative had to have Negative features, our philosophers should have developed such extreme theories as the Static and Dynamic, which stressed the importance of Being and Becoming as the only generative principles of Reality? In what way exactly are the two incapacities of the Negative connected with the Static or Dynamic claims?

What followed necessarily was that Reality, the contrary of the Negative, was bound to have both the features, distinguishability and capacity to achieve ends, precisely because the Negative did not possess either of them. If the Negative cannot be distinguished or supposed to be capable of achieving ends, both the features must belong to Reality as there can be nothing between Reality and the Negative. But that necessity cannot by itself be a reason for holding that Reality must have Being or Becoming as its essential quality. Why then did the Static and Dynamic traditions arise?

To our mind, at this stage of early speculation nothing short of an acute philosophic misfortune occurred. Distinguishability, it seems, came to be understood as "distinctness" or "being," and activity or capacity to act as "change" or "becoming." Reality was distinguishable in the sense that it had "being." Its distinguishability meant that it was a state or condition in which it could bear predicates. And its capacity to achieve ends was taken to mean that it was by nature the other pole of "being"; it was "change," or "becoming," just what the Greeks started visualizing in the philosophy of Heraclitus.

What these two interpretations meant for the whole of European philosophy this is not the place to discuss. But

at least two distinct procedures came to be formulated with regard to identity on the basis of these interpretations. It was authoritatively laid down that in dealing with any object one has to ask whether it exists or does not exist, and at the same time to enquire whether it acts or does not act. Identity literally implied duality of feature; it was not enough to know whether the object or entity in question existed, its capacity to change or become different had to be equally found out. No doubt the entity is a state or condition, or a subject which simply bore predicates. But it was also a function which was responsible for changes or differences.

But how could two such incompatible features as state or condition and action or function appear together? Is it conceivable that the same entity may possess them as essential features?

It was found impossible to conceive of the same entity as both existent and active.

John, for instance, as an existent individual was found to be quite different from John as an active individual. The philosophers at any rate could not give a consistent account of John. They could not but think that John was both static and dynamic in character, but that did not mean that they could easily explain how John could be both. It was impossible to construct John's identity out of two such incompatible ideas as bare existence and bare action. Consistency is the last thing that could result from such construction.

It is an altogether different story if by a merciful providence we did come across in our actual experience the identical John. That surprise might have been due to the fact that John was perhaps neither static nor dynamic but something else altogether. But the empirical assurance about John's identity was no help to the philosophic quest for consistency. The philosophic issue still remained and naturally extreme attempts were made to meet the situation. As

the philosophers insisted on splitting up identity into existence and action, speculation was bound to leave the path of sober reasoning and develop an inflated, menacing extremism.

Gradually the Static and Dynamic systems arose as the direct result of this sharp insistence on the duality of identity. They represented the extreme philosophic moods, and as we all know, an attempt at compromise between them competed at intervals with a frank and robust scepticism.

It so happens that we are still passing through the same anomalous situation. We have not as yet been able to suggest a view of identity which does not imply the dual attributes: (*a*) Being (*b*) Becoming. The issues, therefore, are whether a solution can be offered of this historic anomaly, and an account be given of the conditions which brought about this impasse. We have to discuss both the issues.

A solution probably can be offered, and what is more it can be derived from the nature of Reality itself. If we replace the traditional misconception about identity by the duality of Reality itself, the latter may be trusted to solve the time-honoured enigma of Being and Becoming.

But before we proceed to formulate that solution, it might be necessary to deal with the second issue: the genesis of the Static and Dynamic theories.

And we shall open the enquiry with the suggestion that a confusion about the meaning and nature of the Negative appeared to the philosophic mind as soon as it seriously tried to define the Negative. It was this confusion that was at the root of the philosophic effort to ascribe Being and Becoming to the Positive.

The confusion arose from the simple fact that while the Negative appeared to be nothing but the void, empty, blank nothingness, it could not be disposed of as impossible or inconceivable.

It will be totally incorrect to say that the Negative was altogether *non est* to any mind, philosophic or non-philo-

sophic. On the contrary, it was the chief and only source of perpetual dread to the human mind. There was not a case of failure or frustration in life which could be explained except by tracing it to the Negative, a demon who struck, as it were, from behind the clouds. If human mind was baffled by anything, if it was driven to commit excesses of all kinds, it was under the influence of the Negative, and the Negative alone.

And it was not necessarily the dismal experiences of life that made the Negative so real and effective; to the philosopher at any rate there was a clear note in the Law of Contradiction which testified equally to the same grim reality. In so far as the law definitely held that it was the co-existence of the Positive and Negative that made the contradictory possible, the Negative was directly distinguished from the impossible, or the non-existent. The Negative had to be understood as perfectly conceivable; at any rate the philosophic mind had to reckon with it.

At the same time, the Negative, frankly, was nothing but the Non-Being, and void. There was or could be nothing in existence which would correspond to it or represent it by any chance. The Negative is the void, blank nothingness in which not even identity can thrive. No mind, whether it were philosophic or non-philosophic, could avoid this conclusion about the Negative. And the chief reason for the dread of the Negative lay in the belief that the Negative could annihilate everything, reducing all existence to sheer non-existence.

The root of the confusion about the Negative lay in the simple fact that the Negative appeared to the human mind with incompatible features: (*a*) non-existent and void, (*b*) conceivable, therefore capable of existing. The human mind could not honestly make out how the Negative could be void and non-Being and at the same time conceivable and therefore existent.

It is for the scholars to assure us that tradition did see a

way out of this impasse about the Negative. So far as we know, it did not; it had to drop the enquiry about the Negative altogether. And precisely because it had to leave the Negative well alone, there was no alternative for it but to analyse the Positive. And this analysis might have been started with the assurance that a conclusive proof of the Positive, if it were possible, would undermine the Negative. If the Negative cannot be dealt with, by reason of its contradictory significance, the Positive can be; and if human mind succeeded in building up a system of thought sufficiently comprehensive and coherent, the failure to tackle the Negative might be more than made up for.

And as far as we can guess, almost the initial step in this analysis took the form of attributing to the Positive the categories of Being and Becoming.

While the Negative, by reason of its nothingness was found to be indistinguishable and incapable of achieving any end, the Positive necessarily had to be given these two characters: (*a*) distinguishability, (*b*) capacity to achieve ends. There was nothing uncalled for or unreasonable in this procedure. If the Positive and Negative were incompatible and opposites, what the one did not possess the other was bound to possess.

But it was quite uncalled for and arbitrary to define distinguishability as distinctness or being or condition, and capacity to achieve end as becoming. It is one thing to argue that if anything is distinguishable it must be positive, identical and individual—a different thing to claim that distinguishability of anything means nothing but its bare existence. Similarly, if anything is to achieve end it must be able to function, but that need not mean that it must be merely change. Besides, both distinguishability and capacity to achieve end may be defined with perfect consistency without bringing in the ideas of being and becoming, and we shall soon see how that can be done.

But it might be necessary to analyse the two conceptions

of "being" and "becoming" more elaborately before we can establish the point of our comment on tradition. Our main contention really and truly is that being and becoming are not conceivable notions. They are not only incompatible and therefore incapable of appearing together in the Positive. They are inconceivable and meaningless; we can do nothing with them.

And the issue about them is not whether tradition was at all justified in attributing them to the Positive, the issue was how they came to suggest that predication. We may discard them as meaningless but we cannot deny they played a part in traditional speculation. We have to account for that speculative history.

The notion of being, it seems, arose by way of contrast to the notion of nothingness or void. Human mind was bound to think of the Positive as bare being or existence, if somehow it was under the suspicion that non-being, or nothingness, was conceivable. If the void could be or had to be supposed as real, if the possibility of its being a fact had to be taken as necessary, the Positive had to be supposed as bare being. The notion of non-being seems to be the extreme opposite of the notion of the perfect or absolute Being.

On the other hand, if we think of the Positive as a graded series, or a whole constituted by graded parts, beginning from the simplest and elementary up to the most perfect and complete, non-being would be contrasted with the simplest part. And what would be the simplest part unless it were bare existence, precisely because non-being was not even existent?

The idea of existence or being can be contrasted with the idea of non-existence, assuming that the latter is conceivable and real. It is just the opposite of non-existence and nothing else. If you have to think of non-existence, you have to think of bare being and existence. It does not seem that one can escape that necessity.

And once we make up our mind to believe in bare being, it follows that we have to believe in becoming too, which is bare acting, or change. If the Negative as bare nothing is without existence, it is also without any capacity to change or act. The Positive, therefore, has to be credited with both being and becoming as its elementary features, if the Negative in its bareness is conceived to be real.

Besides, at this rate the whole notion of the Positive is bound to imply the graded or evolutionary form. Any conception of it will have to start with bare being and end up with the absolute and perfect. Perhaps tradition did not think of the Positive except in these two forms, in which the notion of finality played a very conspicuous part.

In any case the notion of non-existence or nothing, if it is assumed as real and conceivable, is bound to lead on to the graded or evolutionary conception of the Positive with finality as its ultimate feature.

But was tradition justified in conceiving of bare nothingness as real? The issue is fundamental and perhaps the failure of tradition to deal with it satisfactorily was responsible for the failure of modern philosophy to solve the speculative problems.

We do not see how the notion of bare nothingness can be regarded as conceivable. We do not mean that the notion never appeared in speculative history, but it is not true that we can form a consistent idea out of the claim on its behalf.

If we assume for the sake of argument that the notion of nothingness is legitimate and conceivable, we have to admit that somehow destruction and annihilation of identities or values must be brought about. Nothingness can result only from a wholesale and absolute annihilation of identities and values.

But is it possible that we can conceive of such a wholesale and absolute annihilation? We can, if only we can assume with consistency that values and identities by their nature admit of such a ruthless change. In other words, it is only

the assumption that they are by their nature determinate and discontinuous that can make wholesale annihilation possible or conceivable.

But certainly no human mind ever succeeded in conceiving of the Positive or the values as altogether determinate and discontinuous. There have been robust minds, no doubt, that refused to take account of the continuous and the endless. But the endless and the continuous did not disappear from the horizon of traditional history, even though nobody succeeded in giving a satisfactory account of them. Even to-day, when centuries of human effort to reconcile their competing claims practically failed, both notions are standing out as equally conceivable.

If we have to deal with the Positive at all, we have to keep in mind that it is somehow just as continuous and endless as it is discontinuous and bounded. Annihilation of values and identities, therefore, is a contradiction in terms. It could never have taken place. Nothingness was only a chimera. Whatever the Negative might be, it could never be the void, precisely because the void meant annihilation. And if the void is inconceivable, what significance is there left to the notion of bare being, which had a claim to conceivability only as the opposite or contrary of the void?

Exactly the same reason could be adduced for discarding the notion of becoming. Just as being was significant by way of contrast to the void, in the sense of non-existence, becoming was significant for its sharp opposition to the notion of non-action. The void, proverbially, was considered to be the home of both forms of negation and absence. Naturally with the disappearance of the void, the claim of both these notions to reality and conceivability disappears.

Whatever the Positive or the Reality may be, it could not be either being or becoming, precisely because there is no such thing as the void by opposition or contrast to which alone they could eke out their validity.

Besides, the positive must be totally immune from the

ravages of the dark Negative, which never ceased to haunt the human mind. Destruction of values never can take place. What can take place is the fulfilment of values.

And this fulfilment takes two forms:

(*a*) Realization of the absolute Positive.
(*b*) The historical and mystical achievement on the relative plane.

The Negative as Negative never functions. What functions in its place is the possibility of the Negative. And it is this sober Negative that gives the Positive the chance of fulfilling the relative values.

The fulfilment takes place in a discontinuous and continuous way. If the Negative in its mood of finality cannot function, it was inconceivable that the Positive should exist as the eternal and absolute of tradition. Finality is ruthlessly ruled out, and in its place an absolute equality, with a satisfying immortality or continuity, is offered to the existent thing or being.

If the categories "being" and "becoming," then, have no legitimate meaning, the systems of philosophy known as the Static and Dynamic which were raised on them cannot stand. If it was necessary to raise them by virtue of the fact that human mind could not escape the illusion that being and becoming were valid and legitimate notions, it is equally necessary that we should discard them, precisely because the illusion is no longer effective.

And the issue that arises after that is, what system should we put in the place of the Static and Dynamic, and what would be the categories that should replace being and becoming.

But before we discuss that issue we may suggest that the philosophic attempt, so far, did not aim at a proof of Reality by a disproof of the Negative so much as at a mere characterization of it. As it did not repudiate the Negative it was more historical in its character than metaphysical.

In the circumstances, some philosophers very naturally claimed that there was no way of drawing a line between philosophy and science. And what that meant was that philosophy was not so much a proof of Reality as a description of it. And this rather unduly sceptical attitude is perfectly reasonable in view of the fact that proof of Reality was unattainable so long as the outstanding belief of human history—the Negative is conceivable—stood uncontradicted.

But it did not follow that the line should never have been drawn between science and philosophy. Perhaps a little less of mathematical devotion to the stars or to the bare lines and points which, like the whirling protons and electrons, are supposed to weave only patterns, might have made them more accommodating or less downright. In any case the laws of thought to which they all swore allegiance were not quite dead, and it might have been more proper for our mathematical philosophers to wait for the new star in the firmament than to burn their boats in cynical despair.

We do not claim to have discovered that new star but we have a positive suggestion to make about the dissolution of the traditional claim about the Negative.

The dissolution in our scheme will take place in the shape of re-interpretation of the traditional belief, and that might be sufficient for the purpose of counteracting its outstanding challenge to all system-building.

Let us now go back to the systems.

The categories that are suitable to the Positive, if we propose to define its essential meaning, are the two categories which we have repeated times without number: (*a*) Absolute and non-related; (*b*) Relative and possible. The Positive is both absolute and relative, and in the sense and manner in which we have interpreted these terms. Between them, these two categories are capable of comprehending the whole career or existence of the Positive. There can be nothing which is legitimately attributable to the Positive that cannot be accounted for by them. Change and difference, unique-

ness and relation, simple and multiple, continuous and discontinuous, etc., all trace their descent from them.

And it is by no means difficult to interpret the two notions: (*a*) distinguishability; (*b*) capacity to achieve ends which gave rise to the categories of being and becoming. Distinguishability implies duality of absolute and relative existence. The Positive is distinguishable by contrast with the relative and vice versa. It does not mean distinctness although it implies uniqueness of both the absolute and relative existent. Similarly, capacity to achieve an end is equally proved by the fact that neither the absolute nor the relative existent is permanent and eternal. As both the existents are equally valid and indispensable, their alternation would have been inconceivable if permanence were not ruled out. Both of them have to achieve ends, in the sense that both can equally happen, instead of only one of them indeterminately holding the stage of existence. An indeterminate existence, whether we call it by the name of static permanence or dynamic evolution, is fatal to duality in our sense. The existent must be strictly definite in the sense that it could neither fail to realize itself nor stand in the way of other realizations. It should be a unique realization, a function that just discharges itself, an event that happens. And difficulty in the path of such a unique realization cannot appear, in so far as the notion of bare being or existence has been done away with. Once we saw that bare being or condition or endurance was a meaningless notion, there was nothing to prevent the happening of a unique event or realization. Technically, time as sheer and pure endurance cannot complicate the possiblity of such an event. The event in question is not expected to fill in time or stand on a point of space, for time and space in that sense are nothing but the conception of bare being and existence. We do not have to ask the question whence it came or what happened to what it produced. Before or after the event there could be nothing which may even be

mistaken for it, and so long as the event was on it was not mixed up with anything else. It is independent and unique, with a scrupulous originality. The question of beginning or ending has no sense in the traditional meaning.

And if we can accept the interpretation of distinguishability and capacity to achieve ends, the Positive can by no means be identified either with the monistic absolute which was permanent and eternal, nor with an evolutionary series which split up the monistic absolute into a graded succession of points or parts or moments. The question of finality is ruled out by the view of duality we have suggested, exactly as the distinction between the limited and unlimited was done away with.

And we may close this analysis by a brief comparison between the Positive and Negative. Let it be noted that the Positive and the Negative exclude each other as much as they relate each other. In their absolute forms, the Positive stands for the preservation and fulfilment of all conceivable values, while the Negative stands for the destruction of them. In their related forms they clash with one another, just as much as they complement each other. So that where the Positive exists as absolute and non-related, in which state spontaneous realization takes place, it also exists in relation to the Negative, in which case doubt and confusion about the absolute state appears alternately with belief and certainty about it. And the whole drama works out in a discontinuous and continuous way which gives every conceivable possibility a chance.

CHAPTER XI

THE CONTINUOUS AND THE DISCONTINUOUS

Nature of the continuous and discontinuous universes—relation between them—analysis of the terms—their relation to Time—theory of Beginning and Ending—the continuous and discontinuous are not the same thing as the unlimited and limited—our theory of Infinite and Finite—features of the continuous and discontinuous universes.

We have already seen that the realm of possibility, or Reality in relation to its contrary, must be in two universes rather than one, and that these universes must succeed one another instead of being simultaneous. We have seen also that there could be no difficulty about them even if they directly implied difference, change and succession. Our long discussion on the contrasted notions such as identity and difference, permanence and change, relation and succession ought to have met the difficulty that was traditionally raised.

We shall now proceed to deal with the continuous and discontinuous universes themselves.

Two main issues have to be dealt with: (*a*) what is the precise character of the continuous and discontinuous universes; (*b*) in what exact way do they stand related? And as the initial or preliminary question with regard to these issues bears directly on the meaning of the two terms "continuous" and "discontinuous," we have to begin the enquiry with an analysis of their meaning.

Let us begin with what may be roughly called the empirical account.

The terms continuous and discontinuous, are perfectly conceivable and relative terms. It will be universally argued that if we conceive of an entity beginning and ending we can equally conceive of it as endlessly continuing, whatever

that might mean. Indeed, it is almost a riddle why a process which once began should either ever stop or indulge instead in endless continuation. If we go by our normal experiences, we have no reason whatever to choose between the one form of change or succession and the other.

Perhaps it is this universal experience of continuing and discontinuing that might have led to the celebrated mathematical claim of keeping a series alive by adding the figure 1 to it. No mathematician would dream of attempting such a desperate act if the possibility of continuing was not a fact of experience or the actual discontinuance of a process was not a fact too.

The ordinary experience, again, in watching a boundary receding or a horizon retreating as we change our landscape; or the volume of our experience expanding or contracting as we explore its reaches or contents, testifies to the same fact. If we go by our normal experiences which do not raise logical complications there is no reason why we should not accept both the terms as perfectly significant. Things, events and human persons both continue and discontinue as a matter of fact.

Logically the terms "continuous" and "discontinuous" imply succession in two different senses, and the main issue with regard to that difference bears on the relation of the two terms to the category of Time. It means that the question of their origin or terminus has to be discussed. and the analysis that we propose to suggest may appear to be quite unusual.

There is no occasion for the continuous to begin or end, although it must both begin and end. On the other hand, so far as the discontinuous is concerned, it must both begin and end, and can never be without a beginning and end.

Obviously the account of the discontinuous should be perfectly easy to follow: our usual, normal experience is of this type. But it should be difficult to follow the account of the continuous. How could the same thing both begin and end, and at the same time both not begin and not end?

But before we discuss what looks like a conundrum of logic, we might analyse the term "continuity," from which the term "continuous" should be carefully distinguished.

Traditionally, the main feature of continuity seems to be bound up with the notion of identical survival. The image of a line or thread has often been used to visualize this notion. There are two issues involved in the idea of continuity—identity and survival. And to follow this complicated notion we have to refer to the Law of Identity, as it is the only law which decides whether identity must survive.

What then is the verdict of that law with regard to continuity?

It is a truth that the identity of any entity must necessarily be unique and independent. To dispute this statement is to dispute the law itself. But it does not follow that uniqueness or independence necessarily implies survival of identity. If, still, we insist that it does, we should plead guilty to a desperate anxiety for logical immortality. The fact is that there is nothing in the Law of Identity to prevent a unique identity from normally coming to an end. On the contrary, identity of any description must necessarily imply what we described as achievement, which is fatal to continuance or permanence in any sense. All that the Law of Identity vouches for is, that if there happens to be an entity with an identity of its own, and so long as it is there, it must be unique and identical with itself. In other words, change is not by any means excluded by the law as if it were a fatal contradiction to identity. And change is not only perfectly consistent with and indispensable to identity, it becomes irrational only when it is entangled with continuity. If difficulty about change did actually arise it arose solely because of the fact that we were greedy enough to preserve the survival of identity along with difference. Our philosophers, in a fit of absent-mindedness, were eating the cake and at the same time arguing that they had it. That is really the chief reason why such devices as "concrete

universal," "identity in difference," fell like a house of cards as soon as the credit or authority of those who had the courage to make them fell.

The notion of continuity had no foundation if the Law of Identity has any significance. There is no need for us to confuse the continuous with continuity. What we can do is to find out if the idea of what may be called suspense or halt or break or interval is consistent with its integrity. And we shall see what this notion of suspense or interval means if we go back for a moment to the notion of the discontinuous.

We have suggested already that the nature of the discontinuous is to begin and end. If we at all understand what is meant by beginning and end, there should be no difficulty in accepting this normal statement.

But what is exactly meant by the beginning or ending of any entity? What is to begin and end?

The question of beginning is a question of precedence. That which has a beginning must be supposed to imply a precedent which is not only different from it but must be incompatible with it. It is only the cessation of that qualitatively different and contrary entity that gives a chance for existence to the one that begins. Between the one that begins and the one that precedes it there must be a relation of absolute incompatibility. The finite and the limited, for instance, could not be supposed to begin or exist at all, if the free and the continuous had not been there already. And as the limited and finite must begin and end to constitute a bounded or discontinuous universe, it was bound to be preceded by the free and continuous.

It follows equally that as finite beginning implies the precedence of the continuous, its ending will imply in the same way the succession of the continuous. Ending has no meaning if it is not succeeded in the same way by the incompatible in its turn.

And if we are prepared to accept this account of the two

notions of Beginning and Ending, and if we can further accept the suggestion that the discontinuous must begin and end, does it not follow that the continuous must both precede and succeed the discontinuous? Evidently they are incompatible with each other. So that if the continuous can be supposed to come to an end, there is nothing to prevent the discontinuous from coming on the scene. Similarly, the discontinuous could safely assure itself of an end or demise if it could be guaranteed in advance that the continuous would begin.

The issue, therefore, is, can the continuous both come to an end and begin? What would or could such a strange contingency imply?

We should not forget that we are trying all this time to discover a meaning of the notion of suspense or interval. Let us see if we can find it in the implication of that contingency.

It is evident that the continuous could not be supposed to come to an end if it was not already there as an existent process. We have to believe that it was existent before there was any sign or trace of the discontinuous. But what would its pre-existence mean? Have we to suppose again that the continuous in its turn had to begin too? That would be a misfortune, for obvious reasons.

Can we then believe that the continuous existed without a beginning? Is such an existence conceivable in any sense of the term?

Those who have been thinking long in terms of infinite regress will only be too anxious to suspect its validity. One has either to posit arbitrarily a blank wall against further regress, in the shape of the Absolute or Divinity or First Principle, or what not, or one has to settle down to the excruciating discomfort of infinite regress. These seem to be the only alternatives so far as tradition goes; and the fact is that both experiments have been tried and, strangely enough, both are still claimed to be valid in spite of their

utter incompatibility. It would be wise if we left this ancient mode of settling the question of primal beginning well alone.

Our immediate and personal need is more than satisfied by the fact that we have absolutely established the claim of Reality, after a thorough analysis of scepticism. The question of beginning and ending can have no special difficulties for this system. So long as the persistent horror of Nothing dangled in front of us, these questions were necessarily urgent and serious. With the absolute assurance of its impossibility, as a result of sceptical analysis, we have no need to worry about either infinite regress or an arbitrary stoppage or suppression of its course. If it is indisputable that Reality is, rather than Nothing, there is room for the existence of anything, provided it agrees with or does not violate the spirit and letter of the laws of thought. Besides, we do not have to look for any type or kind of causality, to generate or recreate energy for the possibility or occurrence of any event. In that one truth, Reality is, a provision has been made, once and for ever, for the possibility of any event, provided it does not happen to be senseless or thoughtless or a fiction of the brain.

We can safely conclude, therefore, that the continuous can exist without a beginning. In other words, there is no occasion for it to begin. And if it is there as a matter of course, there is nothing to prevent it from coming to an end; and that ought to give the discontinuous sufficient chance to begin its own career. And what is more, it is the peculiar nature of the process by which the continuous comes to an end that will decide, not only the possibility of the beginning or origin of the discontinuous, but also the possibility of its coming to an end. It will equally facilitate the way and manner in which the discontinuous will succeed in achieving both its ends: (*a*) coming into existence; (*b*) going out of existence.

What then is that peculiar feature of the process in which the continuous, for which there was no occasion to

begin, ended? The peculiar feature will appear if we compare the way in which the continuous, it is expected, should come to an end with the way in which the discontinuous must come to an end. In the case of the discontinuous, the ending or termination means a final and absolute process; there is or can be no chance or question of its revival or restoration. As a matter of fact, the discontinuous would necessarily fail to achieve its end or purpose if it had to revive. Exactly opposite is the case so far as the continuous is concerned—the ending or termination is by no means final, as it must imply a restoration or revival. In other words, it is bound to take the form of a suspense or break, a holding itself in abeyance, on the part of the continuous. What happens simply is that the continuous stops functioning for the time being, the suspension of the function to continue is not a contradiction or cessation of it.

Another way of indicating this peculiar feature is to show that the continuous is not the eternity of tradition. The notion of eternity implied the inability to stop or the impossibility of not continuing incessantly or the necessity of continuing.

If the continuous universe were only another name for eternity, it would be under the strict necessity to continue without a stop. It would be comparable in a sense with the traditional notion of the discontinuous or the limited, which was supposed to be unable to continue, or incapable of continuing. Between them they will represent two forms of incapability. As a matter of fact, tradition did not find a way out of these two notions and ideas of incapability or inability: (*a*) that of not being able to stop; (*b*) that of not being able to continue.

Our view of the continuous and the discontinuous is neither the one nor the other. There is absolutely no sign or trace of inability or incapability in either of them. If the discontinuous stops for good, that is exactly what the discontinuous by virtue of its identity is supposed to do,

Similarly, if the continuous does not continue for ever but falls into abeyance, that occurrence in its career is just what is normally expected to happen. Most emphatically there is no third possibility or alternative. The realm of possibility can be either continuous or discontinuous, and it has to be both in succession. There is or can be no other choice or alternative before it. The traditional conception of perpetual, non-halting continuation was just as meaningless as its notion of a limited, finite and deficient succession.

It might be contended, however, that the traditional conception of continuity did not imply any incapability or deficiency. What did imply real deficiency, according to tradition, was the limited and finite, or what we have described as the discontinuous. The continuity of Reality, according to tradition, was another name for Infinity, a notion which discarded the notions of both beginning and ending as possibilities. In so far as the real was infinite, or had continuity, it was complete and had not to begin and end, as all incomplete things did or had to. The idea of incessant continuation that was associated with continuity was not so much a mark of deficiency or incapability as of efficiency or infinite capacity, necessarily.

And if this idea of continuity stands as valid, tradition may justly complain that it is not the traditional conception of eternity but the conception of the continuous that we have put in its place that should be taken as deficient. And the main reason for such a charge will appear in the fact that the continuous lacks the capacity of continuing without a stop. It was bound to be only a variant of the limited. If the finite or limited of tradition was frankly deficient in so far as it had to begin and end in a straightforward manner, the continuous too was limited, although in a form or style, which may not be quite obvious or apparent.

And unless we can prove that the continuity of Reality was not conceivable, our case in favour of the continuous and the discontinuous is bound to suffer. If it is possible

for Reality to continue evolving without a stop, if there was sense in saying that it was complete, total and had no beginning or end, it would be sheer waste of time for Reality to disport itself or function as continuous and discontinuous.

But is it possible to think of continuity as a valid notion? Let us assume that Reality was so constituted that it could continue without a stop, that it never was disturbed by the exigencies of time, that it was eternally there, moving on and on and on. Would or could such a Reality, however desirable, make room for the limited too which was supposed to be deficient, and had, in consequence, to begin and end? One may, for the sake of argument or grace, concede to Reality the right and authority to amuse itself in an incessant perpetual continuation; but would not such a supreme opportunity involve a sacrifice too, that of foregoing the joy or agony of functioning like the limited and finite? It seems to be obvious that incessant continuation could not possibly coincide with any scheme that was not equally incessant. The limited and bounded was obviously incompatible with incessant continuation. As it neither begins nor ends, it was by its nature the direct opposite of that which was bound to begin and end.

Unless, therefore, we can dispose of the finite and the limited as altogether a myth or genuine illusion, it is sure to be a stumbling-block in the path of the incessant continuation of Reality. We cannot possibly believe in continuity if we have to believe in the finite and the bounded.

It is well known that our philosophers made honest efforts to dispose of the finite and bounded as an illusion, and perhaps nowhere as in the ancestral legacy of the author of this treatise were such strenuous efforts made to suppress the difficulties which arose straight out of the claims of the limited and changeful finite.

And yet it does not seem obvious that the finite has been altogether disposed of. Our philosophers were perfectly right when they claimed that there was such a thing as

illusion in human experience. And nobody need argue that the notion of myth or fiction was not a consistent and conceivable notion. Both speculative and practical life literally stand on fiction and myth. Even scientists who are supposed to be wise men, and who would have none of the mythical and untested lore of our ancestry, have to build on notions which admit of no verification whatsoever. If all the myths and fictions, again, that work in the broad daylight behind the huge edifices of what we call the social structure of the human race were somehow taken out of them, we should instantly be reduced to a homeless wandering. It would be folly to disown fictions and myths altogether.

But how does the honest confession about myths and fictions help the cause of continuity or the capacity to continue incessantly without a stop, even if we assume that the notion of the finite and the bounded was not there as a fact? For the demise of the finite as a fact does not imply its demise as a fiction. There would still be the myth or fiction of the finite and bounded to explain away.

The issue is simple enough. It is to account for the fact that somehow the myth or fiction about the finite and bounded arose. This simple nuisance, whatever its proportion or significance, was still there, persisting, quite out of tune with the spirit and letter of continuity and complete reality. The condition and factor which was responsible for the origin of this myth or fiction was incompatible with the identity of what we call the complete and perfect Reality which is supposed never to err or miss the truth. It was only the finite and bounded universe that could produce the myth.

Who or what, then, by a strange inadvertence, let in that fiction or myth to the otherwise immaculate perception of truth or serenity of insight in the infinite universe?

Obviously, if we are really in earnest about making a case for continuity the finite must be disposed of both as fact and fiction. And our philosophers could have done it successfully

if they had arrived on the scene a little earlier than they had done. If they could arrive before the fictions and myths arrived, there would be some chance for the incessantly continuing universe to avoid the fictions. But they arrived either along with the fictions or myths or after the whole atmosphere of the universe had been clouded by the fictions and myths. The myths, therefore, could not be done away with. Our ancestors were wise enough to delegate the authority over this phenomenal universe altogether to the myths and illusions, or Maya as they called them.

The case for continuity could not be made. The claim that Reality had no beginning and end, that it was complete and perfect and evolved continually without a break had no foundation in fact.

And the immediate conclusion that follows is that tradition might have been equally mistaken about its conception of the finite and fixed universe which began and ended. There seems to be no more truth in the belief that the finite was limited and deficient than there was in the assertion that Reality was perfect and evolved incessantly without a break. If the idea of incessant evolution has to be dropped, the belief in the innate deficiency of the finite has to be abandoned too. As a matter of fact, the two ideas: (*a*) perfection, completeness and efficiency; (*b*) incompleteness and deficiency, which have been the source of all philosophic speculation, seem to be groundless and meaningless. We should be wise and give up the practice of thinking that Reality can be either perfect and complete or imperfect and incomplete. Reality is or can be neither.

What then is the alternative left? Does it not follow that Reality can be only continuous or discontinuous, so far as its relative or possible state is concerned? And if our position has any sense or significance, the notion of deficiency or incompleteness falls altogether outside the pale of reality. Whatever Reality may be, it is neither deficient nor perfect. And when we definitely suggest that Reality must be

continuous and discontinuous in succession, what we mean is that between them the continuous and the discontinuous features will offer to Reality all the chances that it may conceivably possess or claim. They will provide for full satisfaction on both the counts which existence implied—perpetuity and non-limited achievement. What else can Reality conceivably be if we are wise enough not to nurse the illusions of perfection and almightiness?

If we now go back to the continuous, we have every reason to hold that the peculiar process in which it came to an end to make room for the discontinuous was the only way in which it could come to an end. If incessant continuation has no sense or significance, continuation with a halt or break or suspense was the only other alternative left. So that the continuous was bound to come to an end even as it was equally bound to come back to life, for that is the direct implication of suspense or break. There was no other way, and it is needless to mention again that suspense does not mean contradiction by any chance. Both while the continuous fell into abeyance and revived again, it was perfectly identical with itself—a fact or condition which was sufficient to meet the demand of the Law of Identity. In no stage or phase of it, whether it was functioning or was in abeyance, was it necessary for it to be contradictory. It is altogether and through and through a perfectly consistent process.

The next point that we should refer to concerns the career of the continuous after it came back to life again. Our conclusion here is that there is no occasion for the continuous to come to an end again. And the reason for this conclusion is exactly the same as we adduced for the fact that there was no occasion for its beginning.

We can now confidently visualize a picture of the two universes as they stood in relation. We can think of the continuous having existed without a beginning and of its coming to a close, so that the discontinuous may safely

begin. We can complete the picture by visualizing the discontinuous coming to a dead end as it was bound to do, and the continuous reappearing, so that it may continue for ever and never end.

This ought to be a sufficient account, for the moment, of the nature of relationship between the continuous and discontinuous, and it may safely be suggested that if they are incompatible with each other, they imply each other too. In fact they must be so constituted that either both will function as existent universes or neither of them will function. And there can be no question about their being definite and proportionate by nature; so that if perpetuity is to be looked for, as a necessary feature of the realm of possibility, it must be looked for in the results of their joint and combined efforts, and not certainly in their individual achievement. The realm of Possibility will have to make room either for both of them or neither of them. There should be no difficulty in seeing either the necessity or the independence of the continuous and discontinuous. They do not, by any chance, bear on their shoulders the sins or illusions of the limited and unlimited of traditional faith.

And yet, before we close our analysis of the nature of the continuous and discontinuous, we should take this opportunity to compare our view of the Infinite and the Finite with that of tradition a little more clearly. Evidently, our view of the Infinite is to be found wholly in what we have said about the continuous. The Infinite, to us, stands for the process or universe for which there was no occasion to begin or end, and which, at the same time, did begin or end. The peculiarity of the Infinite in our scheme lay in the capacity of the continuous universe—which had been there eternally, so to speak—to fall into abeyance, so that it could be followed by the whole process or universe called the discontinuous, and reappear, to evolve without any end.

Such an Infinite evidently is not the Infinite of tradition, which was supposed never to begin nor end. We discarded the traditional Infinite in our analysis of continuity.

Nor is our Infinite anywhere near the complete, the comprehensive and the Absolute of tradition. We have equally discarded the distinction between the complete or the unlimited, and the incomplete or the limited. We have got instead the distinction between the continuous and the discontinuous, which imply each other and stand in definite relationships as independent and unique universes.

Finally, as we totally disagree with the mode and method of tradition in classifying Reality into infinite and finite, unlimited and limited, complete and incomplete, it is difficult really to draw a comparison between our position on what we call Infinite and that of tradition all along the line. Our Infinite stands as a feature of the realm of Possibility, and we have called it the Infinite simply because it alone was capable of providing what may be called the medium or means of keeping the process of Reality from coming to a close. We took special care to explain that while the discontinuous and the finite provided for what we called the bounded and fixed phase or stage of Reality, the continuous or the Infinite provided for what we called the non-ending phase. We saw every reason to hold that unless there was provision for non-endingness, Reality could not possibly be kept out of the jaws of the Negative. And it was not difficult for us to see that such a provision went perfectly with the bounded and fixed universe which, to us, constituted its opposite and alternative, rather than a part or portion. The finite or the discontinuous was by no means a partial or mistaken infinite.

But the realm of possibility was not the whole of Reality. It was only one half—precisely because it referred directly to the Actual Reality which was the other half, and which never came into the picture at all. So that even after we

have discussed the Infinite fully, we should still be justly suspected of not having discussed Reality fully. There can be no question, therefore, of our comparing our idea of the Infinite with that of tradition so far as the question of completeness, absoluteness, etc., is concerned. Not only is our Infinite not the complete or absolute of tradition, but as far as we can see, the conception of the complete and absolute, whether it was attached to the conception of the Infinite or not, was by no means valid or conceivable. In so far as we dropped the monistic along with the dualistic and pluralistic conceptions of Reality, we wished a respectable burial to all these terms. If Reality must be actual and possible in succession, if it must exist and function as positive and also as a possibility to exclude its contrary, the Negative, what is the good of encumbering philosophical literature with meaningless terms?

Still it may be asked why tradition made so much fuss about dictating with solemn authority that Reality and Infinity had no beginning and no end. Such an enquiry might lead us to a discovery about the inwardness of the traditional mind.

To begin with, it is easy to see that the reason why tradition held that Reality or the Infinite had no beginning or end was that it believed that there was nothing else outside Reality. There must have been an explicit or implicit denial of the Negative.

But what exactly was the point of suggesting that there was or could be nothing else? Do we make a statement unless there is a doubt or question to answer? The statement that Reality had no beginning nor end would be significant if, somehow, it was supposed or doubted that if Reality began, it might or must altogether end. If, for instance, we say that a stone or tree has no mind we mean that those who held that these poor unfortunates had a mind were mistaken? Why should it be different in the case of Reality, although it is ultimate?

But did we ever hear people calmly suggest that Reality began and must end unless they were dead to all sense of proportion? The fact is that Reality has been universally treated either with the profoundest respect conceivable or waived aside with scant consideration. It was either believed to be eternally there or denied altogether.

For whose benefit then was such a statement made? Why was such a statement made by thinkers who profusely assured us that there never was or could be anything but Reality or the Infinite? How did the occasion arise for making such statements?

Perhaps the painful fact was that tradition, especially while it was replete with ancient and orthodox authority, could not quite believe in what it perpetually reiterated. There might have been a lurking suspicion at the back of its mind that perhaps the Negative was not altogether dead. And the more that suspicion deepened under the stress of life the more it might have felt prone to declare that Reality had no beginning nor end. As if there were no other way to shut out the dread of the Negative; as if the repeated declaration that Reality had no beginning or end was the only consolation or device left to the orthodox mind to preserve itself from that dark destiny. It might have served the same purpose as all theological devices and ritualistic incantations are supposed to serve, to disabuse the mind of the dread of the Negative. Proverbially, we shout the loudest and in most incoherent rhythms when we are in the grip of the profoundest dread. And perhaps we may not be altogether mistaken if we suggest that tradition never fully realized that Reality was not a subject-matter for description or characterization and this failure might have resulted from its profound lack of faith in the simple truth—Reality is and Nothing is not—or in its failure to perceive what we have described as the dual character of identity.

We may now proceed to compare the continuous with

the discontinuous, the non-ending with the bounded, a little more closely, if that is possible.

It does not seem that we shall be able to say much about the nature and character of the continuous universe which may admit of what we call verification. The universe with which we happen to be familiar, and of which human history is a record, is not the continuous universe. It is evident that we are passing through the universe which is subject to law and necessity, where things begin and end, and where system and order rules. The continuous universe is supposed to be the direct opposite of this universe. It could be possible for us to describe it only, as we say, logically, delineating its broad and general features by way of contrast with the discontinuous universe.

It follows that if the discontinuous is subject to law and order, we should expect to find in the continuous universe what is the direct contrary of law and order. The issue in the main then, turns on the meaning of the two ideas: (*a*) law and order; (*b*) the contrary. What, after all, is law and order? What is meant by contrary?

To begin with, the term "contrary" implies that the continuous and the discontinuous, though they imply each other, cannot co-exist. So that between the nature and character of the continuous and discontinuous there must be such a relation, that if we try to bring them both into the same arena of existence, they are bound to produce confusion or contradiction. Could we then divine what might be that trait or feature in the texture of the continuous which is bound to end in confusion if it was sought to be blended with law and order? Traditionally, the contrary of law and order has been supposed to be indeterminate freedom, or the choice of alternatives, as we have already seen. We have disposed of the traditional conception by showing that the idea of indeterminate freedom had no sense. And freedom we took pains to explain in terms of the continuous, that which makes room for the non-ending

as distinguished from the bounded, which begins and ends. It will not do for us to revert to the traditional notion of caprice with a view to discover the contrary of law and order. The opposite of the orderly and systematic, in other words, is not the disorderly and unsystematic. What then is it?

Could we say that while in the case of the discontinuous universe there is no room for alternatives, there is room for alternatives in the continuous? It does not seem that we can; and the reason is that tradition was quite mistaken in holding that in the determinate universe the individual will was confined to a fixed number of ends or purposes and excluded from the rest of the alternatives. It was taken for granted that this exclusion followed as a result of its weakness or deficiency. We have shown that the assumption of deficiency or weakness was quite mistaken, in so far as the determinate or bounded universe was precisely meant to achieve ends which were subject to law and order or to a process or succession which began and ended. We took pains to explain that it was a perfectly rational existence and was the only other conceivable type after the continuous which was incompatible with it. It would be as mistaken to hold that the discontinuous universe had no alternatives as it would be to assert that the continuous had them. The whole conception of alternatives suffered from any foundation in fact precisely because the distinction between the efficient and unlimited and the truly deficient and limited, on which ultimately it was based, was altogether groundless.

Similarly, it would be absurd to suggest that the continuous really and truly stood for or embodied the much-appraised infinite possibilities. We have given a decent burial to both infinity and the possibilities, and our plea was that the notion was far too menacing to the foundation of the whole of Reality to be played with. Infinite possibilities, whether in one potential whole or in an actually realized

state was capable of achieving the same result, the annihilation of the cosmic and nothing short of that.

And it would be sheer mockery if after all this highfalutin attempt to exalt the dignity of the continuous at the expense of the discontinuous we deliberately seek humility and call it only an extension of the bounded, or a compensation for it, or just an ideal which the bounded for ever sought but never realized. As we have so often said, the continuous and discontinuous are incompatible with each other. So that if we can contemplate and visualize the future or part of the discontinuous universe, it follows that we cannot hold that the vista in front of the continuous is laid out with precision and that the distance between its origin and demise can be measured.

So far we have made an effort to show what the continuous is not, by disposing of the various interpretations of tradition. Is it possible for us to suggest anything positive?

We can only say that, except for the discontinuous series and succession, every other conceivable series and succession will have a place in it; and if it is necessary that number, time and space must appear in the discontinuous as a necessary feature of the fact that it must begin and end, the continuous is expected to be free from all of them. What that would mean, positively speaking, it is difficult to say. And perhaps it will be better if we close this analysis by suggesting that except for the moment of abeyance or suspense, there is bound to be perpetual evolution in the continuous series. And if we dare attempt to be more concrete and specific, we may add that while in the discontinuous doubt in its extreme form will take the sense of death, in the continuous it may not exceed the limit or range of what we call oblivion.

The account that we have so far given about the continuous and the discontinuous may be taken as sufficient for the moment; and we may now proceed to deal with the constitution of the two universes from the point of view

of the central end—neutralization of the contrary as its negative. We must bear in mind that all this discussion about the Infinite and the Finite, the Continuous and the Discontinuous, arose out of our attempt to discover the nature of the category of existence. As we came to the conclusion that there was a stage in which the possibility of the Negative was bound to appear, we had to find out from the nature of existence the exact form in which that stage could appear. Our long analysis has given us the frame-work of the two universes which represent the continuous and the discontinuous. What remains to be done is to discover what shape or form these two universes are expected to give to the possibility of Nothing and the possibility of Reality. There are two points which we must keep in mind while we are discussing their precise shape:

(*a*) Whatever exists has to exist in either the continuous or the discontinuous universe.
(*b*) Nothing can exist except that which constitutes either a possibility of Nothing or possibility of Reality.

In other words, the two possibilities and these two alone are to appear as continuous and discontinuous existents.

Both the universes therefore must be capable of realizing not only the limited and the non-limited, but every conceivable form of existence; we expect the realization in them, for instance, not only of the multiple variety of existence, but also of the simple. It should be possible for us to call each of them a pluralistic universe as well as monistic. Equally should it be possible to make room in them for all such broad distinctions as Freedom and Necessity, Universal and Particular, Conflict and Harmony, as also for the more specialized distinctions as Mind and Matter, Subject and Object, etc. The question before us, therefore, is whether we can discover or suggest a system or structure for these two universes which would make room for the realization of all these distinctions. Assuming that the two universes

admit of both a pluralistic and monistic constitution, could we suggest a scheme by which this constitution would realize the claims of Mind and Matter, Subject and Object, Universal and Particular, Freedom and Necessity, Multiple and Simple, Conflict and Harmony, etc.? Could we explain with the help of the scheme of the two possibilities, as they will form the main constituents of the two universes, how the two possibilities can appear in all the forms that we have mentioned above? In any case, we should never forget that the main objective of all these forms of existence will be to realize the central end, the neutralization of the Negative.

The immediate question that we have to discuss, therefore, may be classified under two heads:

(*a*) What is the constitution of the two universes?
(*b*) What exactly is the relationship in which the two constituents of the universe, the possibility of Being and the possibility of Nothing, stand?

Let us start with a review of the second issue by a fresh analysis of the notion of Possibility.

CHAPTER XII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE POSSIBILITIES OF BEING AND NOTHING

Further analysis of the relation between actuality and possibility—the state of possibility stands by itself—in this realm Reality and Negative exist as possibilities pure and simple—analysis of the nature of relationship between them—are they similars, dissimilars or opposites?—close analysis of these notions—these three relationships are not only conceivable but essential to the possibilities of Reality and the Negative—there are similar instances of each possibility and they appear in a relation of conflict or opposition and harmony or dissimilarity—on the whole we have got the state of Actual Reality and two different stages of possible reality: uncertainty or confusion, which is the result of conflict and certainty or belief which is the result of harmony—the actual state is neither certain nor uncertain, while the possible state is both certain and uncertain in succession.

THE state of possibility is just as valid and real as the state of actuality to which it is bound to refer. Both states are equally necessary and constitute between them the independent and self-sufficient forms that Reality has to take alternately. They are intimately and necessarily related and form the basis or foundation of all that is and can be.

But it is not true that the possible state stands to the actual in exactly the same relation as, for instance, Aristotle's potential state stood to the actual. The relation between them most certainly is the direct reverse. Instead of the possible preceding the actual, it is the actual that precedes the possible. And as this is a serious deviation from tradition, we might once again repeat our theory of the origin of the possible.

Evidently our investigation did not begin in a vacuum, as if our mind ever was a *tabula rasa*; most certainly we began our enquiry with a mind well-stocked with experience. The point of the investigation was to find out how much

of that experience with which we began could be preserved as indisputable. And the conclusion that followed after a strenuous criticism was that even a universal doubt, logically carried out, could not do away with the whole of our experience and establish Nothing in its place. Reality, in some sense or other, it was evident, was bound to survive.

Soon we saw unmistakably that it was Reality as such and not its contrary, Nothing, that could be absolute. It was actual Reality as distinguished from the Negative that became the first article of our faith, and we moved on to the second article as a result of the application of the Law of Contradiction to our original conclusion. We saw by that application that the Actual Reality was bound to be reduced to a state of Possibility, to give its contrary, Nothing, what chances it legitimately deserved. The argument was that the Negative, if it could not be actual in any sense, could be a possibility. At least, that alternative was open to it by virtue of the fact that it was not inconceivable or impossible by all the canons of the Laws—it could not be done away with. And this conclusion rose straight from the Law of Contradiction, which we took the liberty of re-interpreting. And it is directly under the injunction of that conclusion that we are holding that it is the possible state that presupposes the actual, and not the other way about—a view which is diametrically opposed to what is credited to the great Greek Aristotle or the tradition that followed in the trail of his thought.

Still it is not for us to judge what might be the ultimate significance of our deviation from the traditional view. Only we have to add that unless the Reality were actually there, nothing could be there—not, certainly, the possible state. It seems to be indisputable that the chances for the possible state would never have arisen if Reality had not been eternally real, to use a traditional phrase.

Besides, what is potential is but the unformed and indeterminate, and as such a flat contradiction of the laws of thought. If the indeterminate is incapable of developing

an identity, it should be equally incapable of generating the actual. How could it precede the actual? The possible must follow the actual and function as an independent state.

And the main question that arises after this discovery is what must happen when the two possibilities of the Positive and Negative actually meet? How exactly are they expected to behave as possibilities pure and simple? Would they act as similars or dissimilars or opposites? The issue here is the issue of the relationship between them.

What we have to find out is whether the possibilities in question are bound to clash, and if they have to clash as a matter of course, whether the clash would mean only a contradiction of one of them by the other or a mutual contradiction. And if we assume that it would be a case of mutual contradiction, we should have still to find out whether the relationship of conflict was the only conceivable relationship between them, or whether its opposite, the relationship of harmony, was equally possible.

As a possibility pure and simple, neither the possibility of Nothing nor the possibility of Reality, to begin with, can have anything in it by which it could be supposed to contradict the other, so that it could put an end to it. As possibilities they must be supposed to be equally capable of mutually contradicting one another, or of successfully resisting each other's contradiction. If anything, they are bound to turn out as mutually contradictory or incompatible with each other, in the event of a conflict between them. We cannot refrain from reminding our readers of the celebrated stacks of hay!

But how exactly would this mutual contradiction between the possibilities take place?

Evidently the claims, to begin with, must be necessarily absolute and extreme. On the one hand, it is bound to be asserted on behalf of the possibility of Reality that there is only Reality and nothing but Reality, exactly as on the other it will be necessarily claimed on behalf of the possibility of Nothing that there is only Nothing, and no Reality

at all. There will be a clear attempt on behalf of both the possibilities at an absolute and wholesale exclusion of one another without any question of coming to agreement on any issue on the basis of a meeting-ground between them.

And it should not be at all difficult to see why and how such extreme and absolute claims could conceivably arise. If the Law of Contradiction, as a matter of fact, testifies to the validity of the possibility of the contrary, it should be supposed to testify to all that is conceivable to it as a possibility.

If we have to believe that Nothing can exist as a possibility we have to grant to that possibility the right or capacity to claim that the Negative is actual. The full and complete claim to actuality on behalf of the Negative is bound to be made by it. And it is exactly this claim that is foreshadowed by the neutralization of the Negative which the Law of Contradiction implies. What the neutralization implied was that even if it was impossible for the Negative to exist as the Positive does, it was inevitable that at least an attempt to materialize it into existence was bound to be made. No other meaning could be attached to the notion of the possibility of the Negative. If we recognize possibility at all we have to recognize the fact of that particular form of attempt too. The two go together.

And for exactly the same reason, a similar claim will be made on behalf of the possibility of Reality. There is nothing to prevent its absolute claim.

Indeed, there is no reason why the two possibilities, as they are bound to clash, should not clash with absolute and extreme claims—especially as there is no other way in which the clash between them may arise.

But it does not follow that they must be supposed only to clash and necessarily cherish extreme claims. Extreme claims can only refer to the actualities of Reality and Nothing: they cannot be realized on the ground that the two possibilities were evenly balanced. Neither the actuality

of Reality nor the actuality of the Negative can result from the conflict of the two Possibilities with extreme claims. The total result of the clash was bound to produce uncertainty about both Reality and the Negative. And it may be mentioned by the way that if the actuality of Reality had depended upon the possibility of Reality for its existence, it would never have become an accomplished fact. The possibility of Reality can only make an effort to produce the actuality of Reality, it cannot produce it simply because it is opposed by the possibility of Nothing, whose object was to produce the actuality of Nothing.

The extreme claims of the two possibilities, therefore, cannot be the only claims of which the possibilities were manifestly capable. If they are at all recognized as possibilities, it is to be expected that they will have further claims which must admit of being realized. If the possibility of the Negative, for instance, is considered to be something real it should not be treated as if it were incapable of achieving anything. If it cannot realize its negative claim it must be supposed to have some positive claim which it must be capable of realizing. And the same thing must be true of the possibility of Reality. So that we could normally expect that the relationship between the two possibilities would not terminate with only a clash between them. It would not be a relation of opposites or contraries only, which, in the nature of things, was bound to lead to a mutual extinction.

But what could be the nature of a further relationship between the two possibilities? If the possibilities need not be exclusively opposites, is it necessary that they must be similars? May it not be supposed that they will be either dissimilars or identicals?

There can be no question about their not being identical. As they are by assumption distinct entities, the relation of identity, if it is at all a relation, cannot be attributed to them. We can say with some confidence that either possibility is identical with itself. All that follows from the law of

Identity. But the Law forbids that this peculiar relationship should be extended to anything or any situation which does not possess unique individuality.

The alternatives, therefore, are that the relationship between the two possibilities must be either similar or dissimilar. And it may be suggested at once that as they cannot be similars under any circumstances, they are bound to be dissimilar and that only. It is open to the two possibilities to exist either as opposites or as dissimilars and nothing else. On no account could they be identical or similar.

But what is it that we understand by state of dissimilarity?

It seems to us that a relation of dissimilarity must imply an end or purpose which should appear as common to the possibilities which are dissimilar. If the relationship of opposition means that the opposing possibilities could not have anything common between them, the relationship of harmony must mean just the opposite. The notion of harmony is inconceivable without a common end. The possibility of Nothing and the possibility of Reality therefore, in so far as they are dissimilar, must be taken as upholding a common objective between them. Their main feature will consist in the profession of this common objective.

And yet this need not be taken to mean that they will not preserve their uniqueness or individuality. They do—or their contributions towards the fulfilment of their common objective could not be unique or specific as they are bound to be. After all, it is the unique and dissimilar entities that can be associated with a common end. Neither the opposites nor the identicals or similars can conceivably be credited to profess or cherish a common end. "Common end" is a rare possession which only the dissimilars, and none but the dissimilars, can profess. And contributions towards the fulfilment of a common purpose can come only from entities which have been opposites in some stage of their career; the possibilities of Reality and the Negative, therefore, can never lose their individuality, as otherwise

they would be incapable of contributing specifically to realize the common object.

If the possibilities, then, in a state of dissimilarity must imply a common object and contribute towards its fulfilment specifically, what is the result of the relationship? If it is to be realization rather than frustration could we find out its specific character? The issue now turns on the nature of the common end.

There are three conceivable alternatives:

(*a*) It could be actuality.
(*b*) It could be possibility.
(*c*) It could be necessity.

If it happens to be actuality it must be either the actuality of Reality or the actuality of its contrary, the Negative. And if it cannot be actuality but must be possibility, it must be a third kind of possibility, different from the possibility of Reality or that of Nothing. And if such a possibility is inconceivable, it is bound to be necessity, the only other alternative which is distinguishable from both possibility and actuality.

It does not seem that the common end of the two possibilities can be the actuality of either Reality or Nothing. It is inconceivable that the possibility of Reality can have as its end the actual Nothing, even as it is impossible that the possibility of Nothing can have as its end the actual Reality. If we cannot conceive of a third type of actuality, we have to discard the idea of the common end consisting in actuality. We have to hold that they could not possibly realize anything actual, for the only actualities are either Reality or Nothing—neither the Actual Reality nor the Negative can result from the realization of that common end. As a matter of fact, the conflict between the two possibilities already proved that neither the Actual Reality nor the Actual Negative can be realized or materialized by them.

It is equally apparent that possibility cannot be a feature of their common end either, if only because a third type of possibility which is distinguishable from the possibilities of Being and Nothing is not conceivable. It is difficult to see how the possibility of Reality and the possibility of Nothing can realize some other possibility. The conclusion that seems to follow, therefore, is that necessity or certainty is the only conceivable alternative that is left to characterize the common end or purpose. In other words, the two possibilities, possibility of Reality, possibility of Nothing, between them, will have to produce "necessity," or certainty, which is clearly distinguishable from both possibility and actuality.

It is necessary, therefore, that we should discuss two very important questions at once:

(*a*) What is necessity or certainty?
(*b*) If certainty or necessity is to be the feature of the common end of the possibilities, could it be a certainty of Reality or of its contrary, Nothing?

As regards certainty or necessity, if we refer to it at all, we do so only in connection with the common end of the possibilities in question. In so far as the possibilities of Reality or Nothing have to be related with a common end, the question of certainty or necessity arises. If the idea of common end had never arisen, there would have been no occasion for referring to certainty or necessity.

It follows therefore that if the notion of certainty or necessity is to be distinguished from any other notion, we must look for its contrary where the common end is actually absent and in its place the contrary ends appear. If certainty or necessity is a distinguishing feature of the common end, the contrary of necessity must appear as a feature of the contrary ends of the possibilities. And it needs no fresh argument to prove that the possibilities do entertain both kinds of end, as they have to be in conflict and harmony in succession.

The question then arises, what is the feature or character of the end which the possibilities cherish when they are in conflict? The answer is that the ends that are cherished in conflict contradict each other. They are direct opposites or incompatibles.

There should be no hesitation, therefore, in contrasting the feature of certainty, or necessity with the feature of uncertainty and incompatibility. The two notions of certainty and uncertainty stand out as contrasted features of the two types or kinds of end that the possibilities are bound to cherish.

And a distinction can be made between the results which follow respectively from the efforts made in the two stages of common and non-common ends. The result in the one case is what is called the state of doubt, while in the other case it is known as the state of belief. The distinction is clear enough.

And it is exactly this distinction that gives point to our claim that if the common end cannot have actuality or possibility as its characteristic, it must have certainty. Perhaps we ought to say, to be more precise, that the common end of possibilities cannot consist in realizing the actuality of Reality or the possibility of Reality, but the necessity or certainty of Reality. It has been already proved by the conflict between the possibilities that neither the actual Reality nor the actual Negative could be materialized. The result of the conflict was uncertainty with regard to both of them. If the Actual Reality had been reduced to uncertainty together with the Actual Negative as a result of the conflict, if uncertainty of both was all that was left to us, we cannot go back to the actualities before we have disposed of the uncertain situation. Actuality of either Reality or Negative cannot be the object of the possibilities in harmony. What alone can be the object is the removal of the uncertainty or establishment of the certainty of Reality or Nothing, as the case may be.

The common end, or the main objective of the relation of harmony, therefore, cannot but be certainty or necessity, as distinguished from alternatives.

And the question that would arise, then, is, could it be certainty of Reality or of the Negative? The answer obviously is that it is the certainty of Reality and not of its Negative that can serve as the common end. Perhaps it will not be incorrect to suggest that certainty of Nothing has no meaning. When we discovered, in the early stage of our enquiry, that Reality is and Nothing is not, the discovery was implicitly an evidence as to both the actuality and certainty of Reality. And it followed necessarily, too, that the Negative was bound to be both non-actual and uncertain. If we have to draw a line of distinction between the actual and possible, we have to draw a line equally between certainty and uncertainty. The point of importance to remember is that what is actual may be both uncertain and certain, while what is non-actual can be only uncertain. This is a very important distinction. Reality, again, may be both actual and possible while the Negative can be only possible. And in so far as both Reality and the Negative can be possible they can both be uncertain; uncertainty is a feature of possibility. If the Negative had not been possible, there would be no question of its uncertainty. But it does not follow that because there is such a thing as possibility of the Negative, the Negative can be certain as well. Whether it would or could be certain is a question not of its possibility but of its actuality. If it could be actual it could be certain too. What we have to remember is that the non-actuality of the Negative removed the chance of its certainty altogether. So that the stage of possibility, if it could produce its uncertainty, was not capable of producing its certainty too. No such deficiency existed with regard to Reality, simply because it was actual. Still, we must remember that both certainty and uncertainty are features of the ends which are realized in the realm of possibility. The Actual Reality

in itself is neither certain nor uncertain, exactly as the Negative which is non-actual has nothing to do with certainty. The truth about certainty or uncertainty is that we can talk about Reality in a state of certainty or uncertainty, exactly as we can talk about its being actual or possible. The fact is that we have to deal with three different stages: (*a*) stage of actuality; (*b*) stage of possibility; (*c*) stage of certainty and uncertainty.

In other words, we can talk of Reality as actual and the Negative as non-actual, and again of Reality as possible and the Negative, too, as possible, and finally of possible Reality as certain and uncertain and the Negative as uncertain only. The common end or objective therefore of the two possibilities in a relation of harmony must be the certainty of Reality.

CHAPTER XIII

RESTATEMENT OF OUR MAIN POSITION

Restatement of our main position—distinction between the Negative and the possibility of the Negative—the same distinction between Reality and the possibility of Reality—function of the Negative.

THE conclusions we have reached so far might appear to be strange indeed if we compare them with the orthodox or traditional view. Ours is a clear departure from the traditional line, and it would serve our interest considerably if we show once again how the whole of our position may be traced to the laws of thought, than which nothing more responsible or authoritative can be found. In fact, no position on issues which are directly or frankly metaphysical should be held without a direct or indirect injunction from the laws of thought. In any case, the main issue is not whether a particular philosophical theory is or is not approved by the scholastics of the period in which it happens to be suggested. Even after it has been thrown out as nonsense by the presiding authorities, there is a higher court of appeal for the disgraced or abused philosophy. If by any chance it could revive its claim on the basis of the sanction by the Laws of Thought, the official disapproval need not be supposed to have disproved or disgraced it for ever. Besides, the officialdom in all spheres of thought hold their power and authority under the aegis of the same Laws of Thought; and as it is well known that the authority is held rather tentatively in lieu of a better or more efficient claim, there need be nothing oracular or rigidly final in the official decree. Its thunder or bluster, as the case may be, is mere technique, intended to draw attention to it and should be taken as a corrective to flippancy or artificiality that may easily affect the original

claim. Pretence is a trait of character which insidiously burrows holes in the keen aspiration of originality. There is no escape from that infection except the rude reminder that the way to recognition lies through the reformulation of tradition.

We have already seen that, by the laws of thought, Reality has to appear in two distinct states, though in succession:—

(*a*) The realm of Actual Reality.
(*b*) The realm of Possibility.

We took pains to make this point abundantly clear, as it happened to be literally the basis on which the whole of our metaphysical scheme stands. We have seen also that a whole series of conclusions followed from that fundamental position which had a direct bearing on the celebrated classical issues such as Identity and Difference, Permanence and Change, etc. What it is necessary to discover now is, whether the distinction between the actual and possible Realities is capable of throwing light on the claim we have just demonstrated as to the relationship between the possibilities.

We believe that it can be, and the reason for that belief will appear if we just go back for a moment to the analysis we have made as to the meaning of the claim or fact that by the Laws of Thought, A and Not-A, to use symbols, are opposites. We definitely suggested that A and Not-A cannot be regarded as opposites unless they were also regarded equally as co-existent. There is no sense to us in the notion of opposites unless co-existence is implied by it. We repeated more than once that A and Not-A, to be opposites, must oppose one another, which meant necessarily that they must not only be capable of existing but must actually co-exist. Between non-existent objects, there can be neither opposition nor harmony, and what is equally apparent is that between an object which is present and another which is past or future there can be no relation, whether of opposition or harmony. If this cardinal truth about the nature of relationship or objects in existence is

seriously objected to, this philosophy, at any rate, has no chance of survival; and we do not propose to adduce any further evidence for its resurrection.

But if we do not find ourselves in the mood to question this cardinal truth, we may ask the question, what is it that co-existence means or implies? Does it not imply the existence of relation too between the co-existent entities, unless we are prepared to espouse the precarious chances of absolute differents? The fact is that we cannot conceive of co-existence without conceiving of relation. There cannot be two objects co-existing which at the same time must be supposed to be unrelated. As a matter of fact, the notion of non-relation goes altogether and without difficulty with the notion of A and Not-A, in so far as they are conceivably positive and actual. A and Not-A in their pure form do not and cannot co-exist, as the Laws so definitely stated. If one of them existed, the other could not; and the fact was that it was only A, taking it to mean "Reality," that existed, and never Not-A. We had the chance of explaining all this at the very beginning of this enquiry.

But it does not follow that if relation is necessarily implied by co-existence, co-existence should be taken as only another name for relation. On the contrary, if co-existence had not arisen independently as a necessity from the nature of the contrary of Reality as a possibility, there would have been no occasion or chance for the existence of relationship. In the scrupulously pure monistic state, for instance, which is the direct opposite of the state of co-existence, the question of relation and difference or change and order does not and cannot arise. The fact is that the human mind, in so far as it aspired to be non-historical or non-phenomenal, understood by it what is called the undifferentiated, non-related or unchanging state of existence. And even if it may be difficult to accept without comment all that it has put on record as to the nature of the monistic state, it need not imply that the non-monistic state, which happens to be its contrary, should not be taken as something quite distinct and

altogether unique or independent. There is no reason, therefore, why we should not distinguish between the non-monistic state, as such, and the relations that it was capable of bearing, if the non-monistic state is just as good or valid a notion as the monistic.

And there is a special reason why this feature of the existent, the fact of being non-monistic, a state or condition which is directly deducible from the idea of co-existence, should be as clearly brought out as possible. The fact is that it is in this feature of the existent, and this alone, that the origin of the notion of multiplicity, or many, is to be found, and also the source of what is called mathematical reality. Reality, if it is to make room for co-existence at all, has to make room for the many. Between the monistic Reality and the multiple Reality there is no via media. If the realm of possibility has to make room for both the possibilities—Possibility of Reality and the Possibility of Nothing—it has to make room for the contrary of the monistic existence. And what could be its contrary unless it was the multiple or the many? In other words, the universe must be pluralistic if it is to be capable of making room for the co-existents. If we have to distinguish between the non-monistic character of A and Not-A, if they are to co-exist, they must co-exist in a multiple universe. The question of co-existence must be directly understood to mean relationships which only a multiple universe can produce or satisfy. The issue of relationship, therefore, is not to be understood as the bare issue of opposition but the issue of as many relationships as conceivable. A and Not-A, to go back to our symbolic expression, have not only to co-exist, but also to co-exist in all kinds of relationships.

It follows, therefore, that A and Not-A will not only be in the relation of opposition but must also be in the relations of harmony and dissimilarity as we have already pointed out. A and Not-A, from the simple fact that they have to co-exist, have to co-exist both as opposites and as harmonies.

If relation has to join them, they must be joined by both its forms. There is no reason why they should clash any more than that they should harmonize. There is nothing to choose between the two forms of relationship. Either both of them must be there or neither of them; that is and must be the very meaning of relation.

But this definite conclusion may well seem unusual and strange if we happen to lay stress on the precise distinction between the positive and negative in which we have been brought up by tradition. Nothing indeed seems to us more obvious, traditionally speaking, than that the positive and the negative cannot, in the nature of things, meet in any sense of the term. As far as we can gather, we were never called upon to distinguish between the two celebrated statements of classical antiquity: (*a*) A and Not-A cannot co-exist; (*b*) A and Not-A are opposites. Somehow or other we were not told that the two statements stand for relationships between A and Not-A, which, in all likelihood, may be altogether different. In other words, the category of possibility, as we have explained, was neither noticed nor valued in the whole course of philosophic enquiry. It was not noticed that the statement, A and Not-A are opposites, meant not only that they opposed each other but also that they existed together. It was not seen that the two statements, instead of referring to the same fact or truth about A and Not-A, referred to two distinct and incompatible truths about them. Besides, the privilege of opposing one another was ruled out as an impossibility by the first statement, exactly as it was guaranteed by the second statement. Our conclusion therefore may well appear to be strange and unacceptable.

And if we want seriously to avoid this conclusion, we should be prepared to discard the traditional habit of confusing the two statements, and draw a line between the Negative of tradition which ruled like the demon and its very mild and subdued protégé which we have described as the possibility of the Negative. If we earnestly make up

our mind not to mix them up, we are sure to see that the fact of opposition between A and Not-A is something quite different from what was expected to happen when A and Not-A could not both exist. In the latter case, not even relationship was possible between A and Not-A; there was a bar between them which not even the Laws of thought could remove. In plain terms, A and Not-A, when they did not or could not co-exist, could not even oppose one another. Tradition was perfectly correct in ordaining that an alliance between A and Not-A, if their co-existence was inconceivable, was but a strange dream. But as, fortunately, that was not the only state conceivable between them, there was no excuse for tradition's vetoing the alliance altogether. As a matter of fact, the recognition by tradition that opposition was possible between A and Not-A, in spite of the fact that they could not both exist, at once let in the possibility of a relation between A and Not-A by the back door, so to speak. And once A and Not-A were actually capable of coming into relationship, there was nothing to stop them from forming any relation that was conceivable. The second statement therefore was like the thin end of the wedge. Its introduction of the notion of opposition in connection with A and Not-A was really and truly only a preliminary to the introduction of the whole range of relationships.

In other words, when and if we think of the Negative, we should think of it not only as the contrary of the Reality but also as a possibility, in which case it will have nothing to do with the Actual Reality. The point is that the two conceptions of the Negative must be kept clearly separate. Their nature and function too must be clearly distinguished. We must bear in mind that what the Negative, as such, is capable of achieving with regard to Reality, has practically nothing to do with what the Possibility of the Negative is capable of accomplishing. If, for instance, the Negative had been there, actually existing, Reality would have been

an impossibility. If anything conceivably will destroy Reality completely it is the Negative. And if Reality, as a matter of fact, never suffered such a wholesale misfortune at the hands of the Negative, the reason was that the Negative was excluded from the chance of being existent by the primary fact that Reality never had to begin.

But what is it that does happen or may happen to Reality as a result of the activity of the possibility of the Negative? Does the possibility of the Negative as it exists side by side with the possibility of Reality contradict the Reality or in any sense diminish its proportion? It does nothing of the kind. All that happens to Reality as a result of the clash between the possibility of Reality and the possibility of Nothing is uncertainty. In other words, Reality is reduced to a state of uncertainty, which is something totally different from a wholesale loss of identity.

Or we may put the same thing by stating that the possibility of the Negative reduces Reality to a state of possibility. Nothing worse than the reduction to a state of possibility happens to Reality.

Even if we have to admit, again, that this was a sufficient misfortune in the career of Reality, there is no reason to bewail over it, if only because it was bound to be succeeded by the stage of harmony between the two possibilities, as we have already seen. The possibility of the Negative, therefore, is not only not a major evil which is capable of contradicting Reality and putting an end to its career once and for ever, it is also, on the contrary, an ally and complement of the possibility of Reality, sufficiently capable of restoring the Reality to its full vigour and its pristine magnificence.

Finally, it seems to us as if the solution of not only all life's problems, but also the problems of thought, which have been hanging fire almost ever since human history began, is to be found in this clear distinction between the Negative and the possibility of the Negative. Literally we

have no reason to dread the Negative; we have every reason, on the contrary, to appreciate and value what its protégé, the possibility of the Negative, brings to us. And it makes no difference whether we have to go through the tension which opposition between the possibility of the Negative and the possibility of Reality necessarily creates for us, or whether we equally get the chance of running through what we call the rich fortune that harmony may bring us. At any rate, between tension and relief, which opposition and harmony may produce respectively, there is really nothing to choose, especially as both are equally distant and remote from the dread of extinction which the Negative alone was capable of precipitating.

CHAPTER XIV

THEORIES OF SIMILARITY, PARTICULARITY AND UNIVERSALITY

Theory of multiple instances or the relation of similarity—theory of uniqueness and description—theory of quantity and quality—the issue of categories and theory of series—theory of the particular—theory of self-sufficiency—theory of form and matter.

WE have seen what happens when the two possibilities meet and in what relationships they are supposed to appear. The notion of co-existence which the law of contradiction implied was the chief and main source of the notion of relationships. And this notion, the notion of co-existence, was not only a clue to the nature of relationships in which the two possibilities were bound to appear, but also a clue to the precise manner in which the possibilities themselves on their own account could appear or exist. We saw distinctly that the universe which the notion of co-existence directly implies was bound to be non-monistic or multiple in its nature. So that the possibilities could appear only in multiple forms. In other words, there were bound to be multiple instances of each possibility instead of a single instance of each.

It would be better, therefore, if we analyse the notion of multiple instances a little more fully before we proceed to discuss the nature of each instance in detail.

We have seen already that the multiple instances implied directly the relation of similarity. The multiple instances had to be similar, assuming that the non-related state is another name for the state of absolute differents which had no meaning. Let us now ask the question, what is meant by this relation of similarity?

Evidently, the relation of similarity is not to be confused with that of either conflict or harmony. The similars cannot

be supposed to be contraries or opposites, nor to form a harmonious group with a common end. What we should never forget about the relationship of harmony is that it appears or occurs between the possibility of Reality and the possibility of Nothing. If we are to suppose that the universe must be constituted by both the possibilities, and that both of them must come into clash and harmony, there is no point in suggesting that the relation of similarity could be identified or equated with the relation of harmony. For the relation of similarity has to occur or appear among the multiple instances of either possibility. It is multiplicity that is the source and origin of the relation of similarity. We can and must think of each possibility individually if we are to think in terms of multiplicity. To say that the possibility of Reality is multiple by its nature is to say that there are multiple instances of it. For instance, if we talk of the term "dog," standing for the possibility of Reality, we have to mean that there are multiple instances of "dog," if we at all talk and think of its multiple character. What this notion of multiplicity implies is that a dog or cat or a man must appear in multiple instances if they appear or exist at all. The question of the relation of conflict or harmony between the possibility of Reality or the dog, cat or man and the possibility of Nothing or the camel, horse or God can only arise if only both sides already existed in multiple instances.

If the relation of similarity, therefore, has to be distinguished from the relation of conflict and harmony, could we suggest any positive feature of it?

The most obvious way of describing that positive feature may be to suggest that they stand or fall together. This is not an extra technical way of describing the positive feature, but it seems to be sufficiently expressive. Still, it may be asked, what could be the precise significance of standing or falling together?

To see its significance precisely, we have to remember that the two sets of similars, to begin with, have to be in

conflict one with another. It will never do for us to forget that the multiples never exist as bare multiples. Existence, in the nature of things, implies either conflict or harmony as a matter of inevitability for the entities that are supposed to exist. So that if the possibilities must exist as multiples if they exist at all, they must equally exist in a relation of conflict or harmony with each other. And as it is essential that they must exist, to begin with, in a relation of conflict, the two sets of multiple possibilities must appear in a relation of conflict.

And it is in connection with this phase of their career that the notion of standing or falling together seems to have a clear meaning. It means, simply, that they will all stand or all fall in that conflict; and as conflict necessarily implies a confusion or complete frustration of ends or purposes, they are all equally bound to fail, in spite of the stand they were bound to make.

Perhaps we shall see the meaning of their failure more clearly if we for a moment repeat what happens in the state of conflict, what it is that fails and how the similars actually stand to one another in the actual conflict. As we have seen already, what literally fails is the end or purpose which in a sense all the multiple instances equally professed, and that end or purpose, as we have also seen, must mean the preservation of a unity which all these similars must be supposed to have formed sometime or other, before they found themselves in a state of conflict. A conflict, as it ought to be clear by now, refers to the fulfilment of a life of harmony that took place in the past; the multiple instances or similars which take part in a conflict put forth individual efforts to preserve the life of harmony against efforts on the other side to prevent its continuation.

One could legitimately suggest that the similars in a sense stand together, in so far as they professed at least a faith in a past life of unity and resolutely meant to continue that life. They were all equally interested in the preservation or continuation of that life. And it must be equally obvious

how they fail together, in so far as all conflict is bound to end in failure.

But we should take special care to distinguish between the relationship of agreement and cohesion among the similars who are engaged in conflict and that among the members who are supposed to stand in harmony. The latter, it is evident, has a common purpose which requires the individual efforts of all the members of the group to be realized. The fact is that either all of them, in connection with that realization, will have to act or none will be able to act. The nearest analogy to this fact of corporate action will be found in the idea of what is called organic growth. The different members may be taken to stand to each other exactly as the different organs, heart, lungs, etc., are said to stand to each other in the human organism. As they all serve equally to fulfil the end of life, so the members of a harmonious group should be understood to serve equally to fulfil some common end or purpose. So that the effort of any one of them is neither possible nor significant apart from any other.

The conditions, on the other hand, that exist in conflict are altogether different. The different groups in the organization of similars do not lose their uniqueness or independence. While the purpose is essentially the same in all of them the realization of the purpose does not imply a joint effort in the sense in which it does in a harmonious group. The members of such an organization act more or less independently, in the sense that the decision and execution of the individual centres does not depend upon that of the other individual centres.

And this peculiarity will be easily intelligible if we keep in mind the fact that while in the case of harmony each member has to deal with a common purpose and nothing but a common purpose, in the case of conflict each member, in addition to the common purpose, has a definite, hostile environment with which to deal. As a matter of fact, the

question of common purpose in the case of conflict naturally falls into the background. It is the hostile environment, or the strict opposition to each member of the organization that inevitably comes to prevail. The issue before the individual centre or the member of the organization is how to deal with its contrary or opposite. The whole question of the preservation or continuation of life of unity that was at the moment a past event really becomes a question of dealing with the attempt on the other side to prevent it. Practically, the common purpose has no significance of its own, apart from this attempt to deal with the contrary.

A line of demarcation should, therefore, be strictly drawn between the two ideas of common purpose: (*a*) common purpose as it appears in the case of harmony; (*b*) common purpose as it appears in the case of conflict.

Naturally, the nature of the organization in the two cases has to be understood in different senses. While the organization in the case of harmony remains strict, in the sense that the centres constituting it possess no independence of their own, though they remain unique, the organization in the case of conflict does not interfere with the independence of the members at all.

If we take, for instance, the case of a conflict between the European and the Asiatic, the centres constituting the two communities can be easily distinguished. There will be no occasion for confusing the Germans with the French, or the British with the Italians and so on. If the fight actually takes place, each of these groups will fight in its own way and fight with some corresponding group or other on the Asiatic side. It ought to be possible always to preserve the lines of distinction between the groups.

It does not follow, however, that the nature and character of the constituent members may not change. The Germans may become more and more powerful and less and less considerate, exactly as the British may become less and less powerful and more and more considerate. All of them may weaken

together and be gradually reduced to a more and more primitive condition, when the lines of difference among them will certainly be less marked. There may be moments when they, on account of the depletion of strength in their specialized group-life, may tend to form one organization. But the differences among them will not disappear. None of them as long as they survived would lose their uniqueness or independence, though outwardly it might look as if they were pulling together to realize a common purpose instead of fighting with a hostile environment. The primitive German will be a very different specimen of humanity from a primitive Frenchman or even an Englishman.

May we not conclude then that there is no reason why we should confuse the relation of harmony with the relation of similarity in any case? May we not hold that the relation of similarity is a relation by itself, and the idea of standing or falling together has a definite meaning?

And if we can claim that we have made a case for the similars and the multiples, we may safely suggest that our "theory of instances" is perfectly sound. In other words, we have every right to claim that the individual centre can exist only in the form of instances which means that we should be always prepared for dealing with multiple instances of it. If, for example, we have to deal with dog, cat and man, it may be taken for granted that we shall have multiple instances of each of these animals to deal with in any case, and not merely one or two. The term "indefinite" may very well be used in this connection.

We have now got the three notions of relationship straightened out. We now know that the two main constituents: (*a*) possibility of Reality, (*b*) possibility of Nothing, have to exist as two sets of similars and realize a central end, through the three stages of conflict, harmony, and unity. We can now proceed to discuss the question of the nature and character of individual centre in more detail. The question that arises now is, what is an individual centre? We know it is

either a possibility of Reality or a possibility of Nothing. We know also that it is unique, independent and original. We know again that it should be distinguished from what tradition called instance. The question arises, could we describe it any further?

But before we proceed to discuss further characteristics of the individual centres, let us for a moment find out what exactly is meant by uniqueness, especially as we are talking of description in connection with it. How could we hold that the individual centre is unique if we hold equally that it is describable?

We are not raising this issue in an idle spirit. Tradition, as it is but too well known, could not adjust the unique and the describable as they were understood by tradition. And yet it could not quite do away with either of them. For one thing, it could not dispense with description altogether as the absence or impossibility of description meant the prevalence of the surd. On the other hand, if the particular were done away with, description ceased at once to have any meaning, as there was nothing to describe. If we do not propose to repeat this well-known difficulty of tradition, we have at least to give a fresh interpretation of both the ideas. We have to explain how and in what sense the individual centre could be called unique and at the same time be a subject-matter for description.

If, for instance, we say John is an engineer, what we have to prove is, in what exact way the statement implies both a uniqueness and particularity and a description or generality. If we do not happen to believe that John is a particular and has a quality in the sense tradition believed, what exactly does our belief seek to imply by "John is an engineer"?

To us the issue seems to be simple; and it is to be expected that we should see it at once if we turn again to our theory of instance. According to that theory, John as an individual centre can exist only as one among many instances. When,

for example, we call John an engineer, what we mean is that John is a particular instance of a series. The term "engineer" implies that a particular function, which can be distinguished from many others, exists and appears in indefinite cases and instances. And the reason why it exists in that particular manner is to be found in our theory of multiplicity which we have already discussed. It is in the nature of things and functions that they must so exist. There is no other alternative.

And if we accept this theory about the nature of existence, it should not be difficult to find a meaning for both the terms: (*a*) uniqueness, (*b*) description. For uniqueness then will refer only to the peculiarity of the instance we have called John. And description in its turn will imply that the function to which we have given the name of engineer is one out of an indefinite number of instances of engineers.

So that the statement, "John is an engineer," means that while we are dealing with a peculiar instance of engineering, we may take it for granted that it has an indefinite number of similars or instances to its credit.

The theory of uniqueness and description that we have just described may appear to be very strange to the traditional mind, and we owe it to our readers to discuss it at greater length to remove its strangeness if we can. We have, however, to postpone the discussion, as it will not be quite in place before we have discussed the theory of knowledge. It would be necessary in any case to bring it up once again while we find ourselves in the midst of our discussion on the theory of concept, which forms one of the essential features of the theory of knowledge.

If, however, the account that we have so far given of uniqueness and description is taken for granted, we may proceed now to find out in what further ways we can describe the individual centres.

We know as we have just said that they are unique, independent, and original. We know again that they are

multiple in their character, which meant that they existed as multiple instances standing or failing together. And if by the way we choose to define the ideas of qualitative and quantitative differences, we may refer to the two sets of relationships which the individual centres form among themselves: (*a*) the set which constitutes conflict and harmony, (*b*) the set which constitutes the relation of similarity. It seems to be perfectly reasonable to describe the similars as quantitatively related, exactly as there seems to be no reason why we should not describe the contraries and complementaries as qualitatively different.

It is another story, however, how this mode of defining quantity and quality will be approved by either the mathematician or the scientist. We can only point out that the notion of quantity does not by any means remove or interfere with the notion of independence or originality. Perhaps we may add that the notion of repetition, if it was seriously meant to suppress originality or novelty, was a mistaken conception. There never was any occasion for the individual centre just to repeat itself, if only because it could not be done. It was left to the individual centre only to stand or fall together with its similars, and that was all that it was capable of achieving quantitatively. It is again another story whether it ruined the prophets of the mathematical heaven, or the dream of universal measurement which the scientist has been planning ever since his eyes opened on the many-coloured dome of the universe.

We may equally, by the way, refer to another issue which rises straight out of the notion of description, and which tradition found it equally difficult to deal with—the issue of categories. This issue arose from the fact that the individual centre which was described by tradition as particulars had to be categorized or judged or described. The categories were nothing but the forms or terms which served the purpose of a medium for description or judgement or definition. The particular or individual centre, as a matter

of fact, was understood by tradition to have two constituents or features: (*a*) that which was peculiar to it; (*b*) that which it shared in common with many other particulars or individual centres. For instance, "John is an engineer" meant for tradition that John was not only an individual but also a concept or category. In other words, there was something in John which was indescribable and something which was nothing if not describable.

And it may be interesting if for a moment we make a broad review of the history of this issue before suggesting our comment on the solution of that issue.

As far as we know, there are two main questions about the categories: (*a*) the source and origin of categories; (*b*) the number of the categories, so far as the history of philosophy discussed the categories. And unfortunately the fact seems to be that there has been hardly any unanimity on either of these two issues. Some even thought that the origin of the categories was still virgin soil for philosophic investigation.

The point is that it is not exactly known yet whether the categories have an objective existence or are entirely the creation of the human understanding. The Aristotelian method of deducing them from the popular judgements is not a sufficient indication of the source or nature of the categories.

The question of their number, again, has by no means been an easy question to decide. So long as the precise significance of a category was not known, it was not possible that one could decide easily what they were or how many of them there were. If we define the pairs of terms like "universal and particular," "multiple and simple," etc., as categories, on the ground that they characterize all possible existents, we do not see how the Aristotelian procedure of discovering them could be of much avail. Besides, such a procedure easily lends itself to complication by the controversy about the universal and the particular. If it is the

universals alone that are to be supposed to characterize all possible objects, could we be quite sure that there were such universals? One might even question if there were any such thing as characterization itself. Besides, the fact is, that what have been accepted or taken for granted as categories for the sake of investigation soon appeared to be hopelessly dual in their character. There was not a single category which was not found to have its direct opposite. As is well known, mind had matter, universal had individual, sameness had difference and so on, if only to serve them as their correlative opposites. It would be a mistake to suggest that multiple and simple, law and freedom, consciousness and object, will and intellect, etc., were not mutually and strictly exclusive.

What again is equally obvious is that the total result of the investigation into the nature of these categories did not succeed in preserving both sides of the duality on equal terms. As far as we know, two distinct methods were followed in making a valuation of them: (*a*) admitting or excluding one of them; (*b*) admitting both of them but denying each in itself. As we have shown in the beginning of this enquiry, if the diverse systems of philosophy arose, they did so precisely because the categories on which they stood could not be reconciled. We have Idealism and Realism, Nominalism and Pluralism, Pragmatism and Spiritualism, etc., all representing the method of exclusion; and at least Hegel's Dialectic is a perfect case in point so far as the second method is concerned. The synthesis of Hegel preserves the contradictory categories, no doubt, but only after they had been practically depleted of their peculiarities. As a matter of fact no category has been discovered which could be used as a principle from which to deduce all the known pairs of categories, even though it has been held universally that "the universe must be reduced, analysed and exhibited as a function of some one principle."

It is neither possible nor desirable that we should go into a discussion on the questions that rise straight out of this very broad, historical account. We have to wait for a full account of our theory of the universal and the particular before the different issues in their review can be fully dealt with. Also, our theory of concept, or what should be regarded as common character, should be known before the traditional distinction between quality or category and particularity or uniqueness can be properly judged.

What we can do in the meantime is just to point out that the individual centre can be regarded as both unique and describable, and yet the difficulty in connection with the notions of category and particularity need not arise. In other words, if the category is supposed to describe it, it need not clash with its particularity at all. The individual centre which is both unique and describable need not be taken as an amalgam or whole which is constituted out of two features which were not only different but incompatible with each other. It should be perfectly clear by now why we are holding that the individual centre is both unique and describable and yet not a contradictory notion or centre.

But the question may be raised, what more is there to know about the individual centre if we have known that it is both unique and describable and realizes a central end through the universal process of conflict, harmony and unity? If, again, all its relationships have been known and the nature of the universe to which it belongs has also been discovered, what more is there to know about it? What we have to keep in mind in connection with this enquiry is that it is not a scientific enquiry but a strictly logical enquiry. Could we think of any other feature of the individual centre which a logical enquiry is supposed to elicit?

There is at least one feature which we have not brought out in our analysis with any decree of fullness, and that is the feature which the individual centre possesses as a serial

entity. Our analysis or review is bound to be incomplete if it does not explain how exactly the serial form of the individual centre works itself out. It is not enough to explain what is meant by the uniqueness of the individual centre; we have to show exactly in what its particularity lies. The question of its particularity in the last analysis is the question of its seriality, and we have to discuss at length what it really means.

And yet it is not necessary that we should try to make a fresh case for the particularity or serial character of the individual centre. There are two points which we made pretty early in the course of this enquiry and which form, as it were, the foundation of our whole philosophy: (*a*) the point about the non-monistic character of Reality; (*b*) the point about the non-permanent character of Reality. Both the points came swiftly out of the discovery that Identity was dual in its character. And it is an open secret now that we can never attach too much importance to that discovery. It was literally the beacon that lighted the path through the dense forest of speculative thought. If we were theologically-minded, we would have described it as a revelation. At any rate its hold on us almost baffles logic and our very modest attempt to scrutinize it. Even if the whole of the enlightened world refuses to follow the light it has thrown in our way, we shall not deviate from the path it has set before us. We seem almost to lose our balance in the presence of this discovery.

But, as we were saying, we discovered almost immediately after grasping the truth that Reality was dual in its identity, that it was neither monistically singular nor statically permanent. All its possibilities had to work themselves out in a perpetual process which had nothing to do with the merely enduring or scrupulously singular. So that we had to build up a scheme of the universe in which both multiplicity and perpetuity had their full play. We have already shown how the individual centre had to exist in multiple

instances. It is for us now to show what its perpetual or serial integrity means. In other words, it is the problem of the particular in the true sense of the term.

What then is the particular? Let us, to begin with, state what it is not or where tradition, to our mind, went quite wrong about it.

In the first place, it was a clear mistake to define the particular as the surd or the irrational factor in human experience. The distinction between the describable and the indescribable ought not to have been made in the way it was made. The only distinction that should have been made was the distinction between the unique and describable. We are not surprised, however, that tradition did, as a matter of fact, make the distinction between the describable and the indescribable. As it failed to find a way out of the distinction between what it called the percept and concept, or that which is strictly singular and that which was by its nature general or universal, it had to draw a sharp line between the related and the unrelated, or the intelligible and unintelligible, or the rational and irrational. There is sufficient explanation of the origin of the mistake that tradition committed, but a mistake is not justified by its explanation nor does it turn out to be a truth.

In the second place, it was a mistake to assimilate the notion of substance with the notion of the particular. No doubt the particular can be legitimately described as self-sufficient and unique, and if the term "substance" is introduced in connection with the particular only to bear out its self-sufficiency or uniqueness no harm need arise. But the term "substance," explicitly or implicitly, has been implicated with the notion of causality, and it makes no difference whether its feature of causality as a predicate or mode was conceived in a static or dynamic form. Naturally it ceased to be altogether appropriate for the notion of the particular in which there is absolutely no trace of causality. And we are adding this with emphasis, as we are

confident that the notion of causality, which was supposed to account for events or changes, and implied the possibility of their not happening at all, was one of the myths human ingenuity had to devise, under the stress of speculative existence. It was not noticed that if events had to be accounted for, we could make no provision for their existence at all. As we have so repeatedly said, there was no via media between Reality and Nothing. We cannot conscientiously call upon the Reality in any shape or form to account for its existence; and if we have to make such a call at all in any instance, it will be stupid on our part to expect that we should be able to release Reality from such a necessity by ascribing to it some extraordinary character like ultimacy or absoluteness. If anything has to account for its existence, the existence of nothing can be safe from the direct challenge of the Negative. The challenge, again, will arise not only with regard to the present and existent, but also with regard to the future and past. It is not enough to suggest that such and such a thing existed; it has to be shown how and why it came into existence. And that question, once it has been raised, will never be answered, as it will put existence and non-existence on a par. If only Reality can be shown to be eternally present, if really the question of existence never could be raised, Reality could be supposed to be safe. There was no other way to establish Reality or anything which claimed to be real. And as the notion of causality, to our mind, directly challenged this basal truth and claimed to safeguard the existence of Reality by some artificial means, it could only be regarded as a myth. We make no apology for excluding the whole conception of causality, in spite of its popularity.

In the third place, it was a mistake again to preserve the credit of the particular by distinguishing it from the notion of concept. The reason is simple enough. There was no such thing as concept or common character in the sense in which tradition understood it in the dim, old past, and is still

cherishing it with unaccountable faith. The particular is not the antithesis of concept.

And we need not waste much time in discussing whether it could be distinguished from the notion of what is called aggregate, or group or organization. These, again, are all myths, precisely because it is the particular and particular alone that is or can be in existence. But what is the particular, positively speaking? Could we suggest some of its positive features too?

We can certainly define the particular as the self-sufficient and unique entity. It is not beholden to anything before or after it, if there was such a thing as before or after, nor dependent on anything which might be existing simultaneously with it.

But what exactly is self-sufficiency which implies its absolute independence? It cannot mean the absolute of the Idealists or the substance of Spinoza. What is it, then?

The idea which, it may be expected, will bring out the essence of self-sufficiency more than any other is the idea of perpetuity or continuity. It is the trait or capacity which is responsible for the fact that the particular is never absent that can be defined as self-sufficiency. What it definitely means is that the particular not only exists when the universe is there, but is bound to be there as long as the universe is there, without a beginning or end. And if it be a fact that the universe is bound to be there in the sense we have explained already, the particular is bound to be there already too. It follows, therefore, that the particular may have its history recorded or written by a process which can go up or down this perpetual stream of its existence. In fact, the identity of the particular can be understood only in terms of its continuous range of expansion.

And, by the way, if immortality has any meaning in connection with human history, the seeds or signs of it may be found in this peculiar capacity of the particular never to be absent. No change that may ever occur in the course

or career of the particular or the human individual can be anything but a phase or stage which its capacity to continue implies. Not even death can truly make a difference to it, whatever its apparent cost might mean.

Yet it need not be supposed that we mean by continuity or perpetuity exactly what tradition is supposed to have meant by it. On the contrary, continuity is perfectly consistent in our sense with what is called discreteness, which was excluded by the traditional view. And yet, again, unless we keep in mind that the notion of continuity excludes the notion of interval, we shall not see easily the point that we are making about continuity. What we have to note is that between two stages or phases of the same particular there can be nothing else—a point which was clean missed by tradition. What we mean by continuity is a series of discrete forms or phases which represent an individual centre, without any interval between one form or phase and another. That is all that is meant by continuity so far as we are concerned.

And if the question is raised as to the validity of such a view, on the ground that the notion of interval is a valid notion, our plain answer is that the idea of interval is totally inconceivable. The notion of the interval, as far as we can see, is bound up necessarily with the notion of the Negative or Nothing. If we have to believe in the interval we shall have to believe in the Negative. There is no other way by which the idea of interval can be preserved. But as belief in the Negative has been found to be inconceivable at the beginning of the enquiry, we have to discard the notion of the interval with it. The interval is inconceivable simply and solely because the negative, its chief and only source of origin, is impossible. How then could it be supposed to create a difference between the stages or phases of the particular? The notion of the interval, therefore, should never have been held. And if tradition could not conscientiously get rid of the interval, the reason perhaps was that it could

never quite get rid of the Negative. And that unfortunate failure would explain why it sought relief or logical security in a conception of continuity which made the notion of change or the discrete difficult to follow. We have no such entanglement with the Negative, and we have no difficulty in holding that the self-sufficient or unique particular is really a series, which spins out continuously in succession. The centre which begins with a series of similar centres simultaneously existing with it implies a succession of phases. Symbolically, A, while it implies B, C and D, etc., as similars, equally implies A_1, A_2, A_3, etc., as its successive phases.

And if we attach special importance to the serial feature of the particular, we may note in passing that the notion of a series plays a very important part in the career of the particular in two definite ways: (*a*) in so far as the particular is unique it forms a series which can be symbolically put as A_1, A_2, A_3, A_4 . . .; all these discrete stages will represent the unique phases of a particular individual; they will not be found anywhere else; (*b*) in so far as the particular is one out of an indefinite number of instances, any of its forms or phases will form a series on its own account.

These two series are entirely different from each other and ought to be kept quite apart; and what is important to note is that both of them will spring from the same individual centre or particular. If we deal with John, for instance, who happens to be engineering at the moment, it will be perfectly reasonable for us to approach John from two separate angles: (*a*) the angle of John's personal history in which his function of engineering will form a moment or element along with other functions which went before or would follow. We might at the moment say that John was an engineer after he had the tempting offer to go and build a bridge over the Niagara Falls, and we might move as far back to the hinterland of his career as we like. We shall form thereby a series of John as he lived from moment to moment

and be perfectly justified in calling it his biography. And some of us may even look for the mystic charm of personality or individuality underlying every moment or phase, whether it was some drab and dismal picture of erecting ugly houses in some beautiful countryside, or offering thanksgiving to the national God for failure of the enemy's crops. (*b*) The angle of John's communal history in which his function of engineering will form a moment or element along with similar instances of the same function in Smith, Robert, and Radhakrishnan. This approach will lead us, as we said, to John's communal history, the history of engineering, or the kind of theme which fascinated all minds, which had more of what we call the abstract than the concrete touch. And what we call scientific records, or truly philosophic accounts, in our days, will arise, and a claim will be made for their veracity and unbiassed representation of truth.

As if the function of engineering, which was John as he existed in flesh and blood, ceased to be clouded by emotion, the moment we started counting it along with other instances of engineering! This is our usual way of thinking about engineering as distinguished from an engineer. It might be useful for us to remember that whether we view the function of engineering in relation to other functions in the career of John, or in relation to similar functions in the career of Smith or Robert, we are dealing with exactly the same kind of entity or existent. We can no more escape committing a mistake in building up the personal history of John than in building up his communal history. A treatise on engineering, in so far as it deals with various instances of that phenomenon, is no more immune from falsehood than a biography in which more than one function like engineering is serially recorded. If the function itself which can appear or exist as a phase or moment in the career of an individual or particular is bound to be tainted in its core, neither the scientist nor the historian or biographer is free from the effect or influence of that taint. But all this need

not imply that one cannot draw a line of demarcation between the two lines of approach with regard to the same individual, and if that line has to be drawn it follows that the same individual could be responsible for the nucleus of two different series. What we have to note here is that we have two definite series giving us the personal or communal history of the same individual or the particular.

It ought to be evident from what we have said about the serial feature of the individual centre, that there was no foundation to the distinction that tradition drew between what it called form and matter. And if we keep in mind the distinction between the personal and communal feature of the individual centre or particular, we shall be able to see how tradition went quite wrong in its estimate of the distinction between what it called form and matter. It was believed that the individual centre was a duality of form and matter or particular and universal, as we have clearly shown. It was believed again that the individual centre was somehow the receptacle of not only the whole of its past history, but also of its future possibilities. And at least in one school of thought it was strictly emphasized that the individual stood there with a background which represented the whole of Reality and a feature which was either a partial expression of it or an effort to realize it. The conception, therefore, arose that in dealing with any individual centre we must be dealing with two different things:

(*a*) Something which is expressed and explicit which forms the subject-matter of history, and constitutes the element of predication about the individual centre.
(*b*) Something which is implicit and, as it were, behind the show, and can be described as the hidden cause or spring of activity, or the substratum or support of what is expressed or expressible.

The existent individual centre, therefore, was considered to be both active and creative on the one hand, and passive and enduring on the other. It was the active, inexpressible

and creative feature that was formulated as matter or particular, while the passive or describable feature was described as form.

Difficulties naturally arose and the obvious reason was that form and matter, explicit and implicit, active and passive, the complete and the incomplete, subject and predicate were found to be incompatible, and as such, could not be adjusted to the individual centre which was supposed to be unique and singular.

Our suggestion is that we can get over the dilemma of tradition if we keep in mind the fact that the individual centre can be approached from two points of view: (*a*) its personal history; (*b*) its communal history; we can call it form if we lay stress on its communal side, and the obvious reason is that in dealing with the communal history we deal with the multiple instances of its phase under consideration. This is the only sense in which predication can be understood; if description of the individual centre is at all possible, it can only mean that we can deal with multiple instances of the same phase. To describe is to collect instances of the same phase and literally nothing else. The bogey of something which is common has got nothing to do with it, and there was no reason why we should have made of the concept a mystical unity which exists as a part of an actual event and yet does not exist in it. The form is not concept. By form we should mean the multiple instances of a series.

On the other hand, we can call the phase matter or particular if we do not leave the ground of personal history. To call it matter is to recognize its uniqueness and originality.

There was no reason, therefore, why the idea of matter or particular should have been mixed up with what was called complete Reality. The unique and original phase of the individual centre stood there as complete and independent, by its own right, so to speak. It was unnecessary and altogether mistaken to trace it to some outside causality, as no such conception was consistent with the nature of Reality.

We have already discussed briefly the mystical character of the notion of causality by showing that it really and truly put the Real and the Negative on a par. We have also shown that the monistic view of Reality, whether as absolute and complete, was meaningless and inconsistent. We are justified in claiming, therefore, that the theory of matter or particular which depended on that view was necessarily mistaken.

The issue as to the nature of ultimate Reality would undoubtedly still arise, and at least in our scheme of thought that issue plays as important a part as the one we have so far been dealing with. This is not the place, however, to analyse it. When we come to deal with the religious problem, we shall have plenty of opportunity to discuss it. It will be possible for us to show that the whole of the realm of possibility has no meaning except in direct relation to what we have called Actual Reality. Its sole purpose is to create a doubt, as we have called it, of that Actual Reality, and follow up that achievement by an equally vigorous creation of a belief in it, or affirmation of it. So that, whatever our differences might be from the whole of tradition, whether it is Eastern or Western, as to the conception of ultimate Reality and its relation to what has been called phenomenal Reality, there is no reason why we should waste our time in experimenting with life and try to deny that there was anything else in existence except our capacity to think and form judgements, as if it is our chief duty only to outwit our fellow enquirers. We claim, on the other hand, to have suggested fresh evidence for the existence of that ultimate Reality, hoping that even the sceptic of the twentieth century may find it difficult to deny.

CHAPTER XV

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE: PART I, THEORY OF MIND AND MATTER

Review of the theories of mind and matter—analysis of the different methods by which to distinguish them—our own method—analysis of the notion of consciousness—our view—analysis of the notion of activity and passivity—our theory of mind and matter.

It may be difficult to deal with the theory of knowledge with technical accuracy till we have discovered what exactly is meant by mind. Whether, after all, there is such a thing as knowledge is practically a question whether there is such a thing as mind, if we go by tradition. Even if we try to believe that there is no such thing as mind—as some philosophers did not hesitate to try--we may be in extremely serious difficulty about many issues but not about the issue of knowledge. The question of knowledge is inextricably bound up with the question of mind. The issue, therefore, that we must raise, to begin with, is not what is knowledge but whether there is such a thing as mind? And if it turns out to be fact that there is such a thing as mind, we have to ask if it is matter with which it should be contrasted, as it has been contrasted in tradition, or with some other entity? We should discuss both matter and mind.

Let us go back to the root of human experience once again with a view to discover in what way especially it may be of use and value for distinguishing mind and matter.

The root of human experience as the chief constituent of the universe will appear to be nothing but the particular or individual standing in definite relationships with particulars and individuals: we cannot go beyond this fundamental situation. If therefore the mind has to be assumed

as an existent fact, it will necessarily appear to be a particular or individual among other particulars and individuals.

But have we evidence enough that there is actually such an individual that we can call mind, as distinguished from other individuals which must be called by other names?

Let us again ask a question about the particular or individual itself which is the radical constituent of the universe. How does it behave or function in its various relationships?

In the first place, every individual refers to the Actual Reality, directly or indirectly, as it must be either a possibility of that Reality or the possibility of its contrary. If we understand it at all, we have to understand it along with that reference. For it has no meaning apart from the fact that it either questions the Actual Reality or frankly asserts it.

In the second place, as a possibility either of Reality or its contrary Nothing, every individual refers as a matter of course directly to other individuals which must exist simultaneously with it in a relation of either opposition or harmony.

In the third place, every individual has to change into two forms in succession, Active and Passive. It will be either in a state where it is actively functioning to contradict some other, or be in a state where it is passively functioning and being contradicted by some other.

The same dual state appears in succession if the relation between the two is one of co-operation or harmony rather than of opposition. It will be in the state of complementing or being complemented.

In the fourth place, in the place of the two individuals or particulars clashing or co-operating with one another, what may be called a monistic state representing a new and altogether different particular or individual appears after the stage of conflict and harmony is over.

In the fifth place, while a particular in question was

passing through conflict or harmony with another particular, the competing and complementing particulars on both sides were bound to appear in a relation of similarity with many other particulars. The clash or harmony always is between two sets of similars.

The question now is, how would an individual which is supposed to be mind differ from another individual which is not mind, assuming that both of them must retain the features we have just mentioned? Assuming that one individual is called stone and another human being, how shall we distinguish between the stone and the human being, if both of them are supposed to have all the five features we have mentioned above?

We are familiar with a long-standing procedure in the intellectual world which deals with all questions of distinction in a somewhat rough-and-ready manner. That procedure is, that an instance is known or distinguished by the class or the species to which it is supposed to belong. If there is a particular dog or cat to be dealt with, the scientist or the logician will help us by giving an account of the canine and feline species. And this procedure is supposed to work as long as a fresh species has not somehow emerged on the scene.

It is not seldom, however, that the scientist is modest enough not to claim that animality, for instance, is a species which can be accepted as a sufficient explanation for the innumerable instances of cats or dogs or men. Besides, he may even feel honestly confused about utilizing the method of classification in all cases or actually classifying even the diverse instances, for example, of plants and animals that he comes across. And perhaps he may occasionally fall into the mood to suspect that terms and notions like animality were after all nothing but linguistic or philological devices for helping the human mind to retain its multifarious instances with ease. But the fact remains that no other method than that of classification has been so much in

practice in the scientific world, and the question arises, can we utilize it for our purpose even though it may not be altogether perfect or workable?

It does not seem at all possible that we can, and the reason for our inability to avail ourselves of this popular method is that we cannot subscribe to the theory of class and species which this method upholds as its main secret. As we have already seen, animality, for instance, as a form or species or concept may be perfectly intelligible; and so may be the diverse instances like cats, dogs, men, etc. But they do not certainly stand to one another—we have explained this at great length—as the scientists, mainly under the Greek influence, preferred to believe that they did. If our position has any relevance, the authority of Aristotle, by which the scientists very nearly swore, was deficient in its core.

There are two other methods, equally well known, by which we could try to trace the distinction between mind and matter: (*a*) deduction, (*b*) evolution. These methods, too, are of ancient growth, especially the former; but it does not seem that we can benefit by them any more than we could benefit by the method of classification.

Deduction as a method is of no use to us, and for the simple reason that the theory of whole and part which it implies is not sanctioned by the Laws of Thought on which we definitely stand. On the contrary, there is a clear indication in the laws, as we took enormous pains to show, that identity by its nature implies uniqueness and duality. Mind and matter, for instance, if they are capable of bearing any identity have to be unique and exist in two forms in succession. This is the least that could happen to them if they are to be accepted as valid and real. The conception of whole and part, therefore, is of no consequence to them, even if such a conception could with any reason be contemplated. It is inconceivable that we could, in any circumstances, confuse the dual existence which identity so definitely implies with whole and part.

Mind and matter, therefore, cannot be explained or distinguished by an attempt to deduce them from some pre-existent "whole" as mere parts of that whole. The universe never made room for such "wholes," and our scientists, who are supposed to have been cultivating the quantitative method for centuries on end, must have been doing something else. We shall try to find out what they could have meant as we go on.

But could we seek the aid of the method of evolution with any better prospects? Could we hold that mind and matter evolved from some pre-existent entity, even if we cannot deduce them as parts from it?

It does not seem again that we can, and the reason for that simply is that the same laws of thought proclaim that whatever is real or existent must be strictly unique. It must be identical with itself. In that celebrated statement "A is A" the whole doctrine of uniqueness was laid down, once and for ever. If mind and matter are to exist at all, they must be strictly unique, or identical with themselves. There could be nothing in their identity or integrity or nature which can be traced to or allied with a foreign source. The only other course open to them is that they must exist twice in succession and with two separate identities; what we have called the Actual and Possible. Let us not forget that under the strict injunction of the Laws of Thought, if mind and matter at all exist, their contraries must exist too; which means that they must exist with two identities.

Does it not then seem absolutely clear that the method of evolution could be of no use to us if we seek its aid in distinguishing mind and matter? How could evolution, which implies a pre-existent entity, help, when the question was altogether one of absolute uniqueness? How could mind and matter evolve from something else which was already there if mind and matter were to be totally independent and original?

We are assuming all the time that the theory of evolution implies a definite relationship between the evolved entity

and the object from which it was evolved. What the nature of the relationship between the two objects is, if it is not whole and part, we need not be in a hurry to suggest. Whether it is some kind of causality or implication, as it is sometimes called, we do not know. But whatever it is or may be, it is bound to cut into the notion of uniqueness. Even if we play with the idea of emergent evolution, where a claim is supposed to be made for something altogether novel in the evolved object, we cannot get away from the pre-existent object, which not only precedes it but serves as the source of its origin. Really and truly, the novel, after all, is not altogether novel, as its lineage is somehow bound with a pre-existent stock. No evolutionist could muster courage enough to dissociate completely the evolved object from the object from which it evolved, and naturally he was on the horns of a dilemma: (*a*) the pre-existent object that was necessary for the process of evolutionary origin; (*b*) the novelty which was a mark of evolutionary process.

The method of evolution, therefore, is no more nor less useful for our purpose than the method of classification and deduction, and we have to devise our own method of distinguishing mind and matter, if it is necessary that we must distinguish them.

And it is not possible that we can do without distinguishing mind and matter. The whole of our philosophic history is much too full of references and controversies with regard to matter and mind to justify an exclusion or denial of the distinction between mind and matter. It may be that we shall be under the painful necessity of rejecting all the theories about both mind and matter that have so far been held; but that will not mean that the problem of mind and matter will cease to exist. Even if we have to take note of the historic fact that altogether opposite schools of thought arose to challenge the validity of both mind and matter, we need not be under the necessity of discarding either mind or matter. The challenge, no doubt, will be found to

have been both honestly and vigorously planned, but to an outsider or impartial critic the result meant a survival of both mind and matter, though only as problems. There was as much to be said for and against mind as there was for and against matter; so that the problem still arose—what, after all, was the distinction between mind and matter?

If we take note again of the attempts which sought to put something quite different in the place of mind and matter, and do away with the age-long clash between them, we need not assure ourselves that they, at any rate, led to the dissolution of mind and matter, which was obviously intended. So long as mind and matter remained, the clash between them remained too; and whatever neutrality one might have introduced into some pre-existent or external entity or factor to assuage the fury of the clash between mind and matter, it was bound to have proved innocuous for the clash itself. If mind and matter were by nature incompatible—tradition could not prove that they were not—the stuff which was to produce them had nothing to offer by its neutrality. The fact that it was neither mind nor matter but something else, while it was a sufficient protection against the appearance of the clash in itself, was no help in solving the clash between mind and matter. A neutral stuff was the last thing that could produce mind and matter, if it were a fact that mind and matter were incompatibles.

And the case for the dissolution of the conflict between mind and matter certainly does not improve if we put the idea of substance in the place of the neutral stuff. The substance, which is supposed to be free from the clash between mind and matter, can no more serve as a support or subject to mind and matter as predicates or attributes than the neutral stuff could serve as their cause. And the reason is exactly the same. If mind and matter are to be supposed incompatibles they cannot qualify the same subject at the same time any more than they can follow

as effects from the same cause. Incompatibility is fatal to predication no more and no less than to causation. A cause cannot produce incompatible effects any more than a subject can bear incompatible predicates. It is difficult to believe that a philosopher like Spinoza did not see this, and yet the records give us no help or assurance that Spinoza was really alive to the incompatibility between matter and mind.

And it need not be a matter of surprise if the Hegelian attempt to deal with the same problem in terms of Self and Not-Self proves to be equally unsatisfactory. For the contradiction between Self and Not-Self, however it might have arisen, remained even after Hegel boldly suggested a synthesis for the mutually contradictory elements—we are assuming that the Self and Not-Self in Hegel may be taken as a distinction between mind and matter. The terminological issue, especially if it happens to possess textual significance, is of no consequence to us. Besides, we are not here called upon to make an estimate of the Hegelian claim that the Not-Self, which was the contrary of Self, came into existence or saw the light of day as the result of what lay folk would describe as an act of suicide on the part of the Self. It must be evident to the readers of this treatise that the contrary is not so helplessly placed or situated as to wait for its origin in an act of self-contradiction on the part of the Self. If it exists at all, it does so by its own right, and, as we have tried to show, it does not exist as an actuality at all but only as a possibility. So that there was no need or occasion for the German philosopher to assume that the Self could not only claim to exist independently but could also lay the axe at the root of its own existence. Such an assumption was neither desirable nor by any stretch of imagination possible. If the Not-Self could not be found with an independent right of its own to exist, the Self was the last agent to bring it into the light of existence. If anything was in the way of the existence of Not-Self it

was the Self, and Hegel's attempt to cut the knot and produce the Not-Self by an act of Negation on the part of the Self was bolder than even the frank violation of the Laws of Thought by the mystics of the human race. It is intelligible only as an instance of desperate thinking, and should be treated as all desperate events have a right to be treated, with the humility which a crisis alone can evoke.

But the point that is of immediate interest for us to note is that Hegel had no chance of eliminating the contradiction between Self and Not-Self, once he had admitted that it was there as a matter of fact, whatsoever the source of its origin might be. If the Self and Not-Self have to be understood to be in a state of incompatibility, no device can make them compatible again; indeed nothing remains for them after that deadly clash except the unerring fate of sheer extinction. And if we are permitted to hold that the conflict between Self and Not-Self in Hegel could be interpreted as a clash between mind and matter, we do not see how Hegel could be congratulated on the dissolution of the problem of mind and matter any more than Spinoza.

It might be interesting to suggest by the way that if, to talk in figurative speech, there was a rock on which the whole of modern philosophy split, that rock was the rock of incompatibility. While its greatest achievement from Descartes to Hegel lay in exposing this outstanding zone of danger in the vast, spreading, tumultuous sea of speculation, it was desperately conspicuous in its failure to steer clear of that zone. And we might with diffidence add that our philosophers perhaps never consciously realized the full significance of incompatibility. The keenest of them were alive to the fact that it existed, that both life and thought produced situations where we have to deal with nothing but sharp and absolute contradictions, where nothing remained to be done either by reason or the human will. But none of them had the patience or courage to ask the question—

what made the incompatible situation possible? Our whole analysis of doubt in the early chapters of this treatise will explain the full significance of our statement.

The conclusion, therefore, that we have to draw from the broad review we have just made of the attempts at dissolving the distinction between mind and matter is that the problem still remains. So that we have either to discard both mind and matter altogether as inconceivable notions or suggest a new interpretation of their meaning. And this interpretation, if possible, will also mean a new device or method of discovery, especially as we have already discarded the traditional ways. Could we then suggest both a new method and a fresh interpretation?

As regards the method of discovery, we can follow the straightforward course of going back to the scheme and structure of the universe that we have already laid down, and ask whether it threw any light on the issue between mind and matter. In other words, in our view, whatsoever mind and matter might be, they have to be features of the individual centres which in the multiple forms constituted the universe. The issue then is, what feature is it of these centres which could be described as mental and material? Could we really and truly find any feature which may without any great difficulty be identified with mind and matter?

But how could we start on this road of enquiry into the nature of the individual centres without first deciding what exactly we mean by mind and matter? It would be odd to try to find out what feature of the individual centres could be called mind or matter if we had no idea of mind and matter. The enquiry implies that we know what mind and matter have been supposed to be, as well as what the scheme of the universe means with the individual centres as its constituents. No enquiry can start without at least a subject-matter before we can ever ask whether it was confirmed or supported by the universe scheme. The question

is not whether these ideas were bound to be valid in any case but whether they could be proved to be valid.

As far as we know, there are two distinctions which are generally associated with mind and matter: (*a*) the distinction between consciousness and its contrary, known as non-consciousness or sub-consciousness; (*b*) the distinction between activity and its contrary, passivity. It is a fact that matter has been defined as something which is both non-conscious and passive or mechanical, as it is sometimes called. It would be perfectly correct, therefore, if we hold that the main issue about mind and matter may be put in two straightforward forms:

(*a*) Can we find anything in the feature of the individual centres which can be called consciousness or its contrary, non-consciousness?

(*b*) Can we find, again, in the same features anything answering to activity or its contrary, passivity?

And if we discover as a result of our enquiry that both pairs of features do actually characterize individual centres, we have still to find out if they are co-existent and equally amenable to historical or empirical treatment. The issue on the whole is not merely to find out whether consciousness and its opposite or activity and its opposite are facts, but whether they are facts of a kind which exist together and can be known and dealt with.

So far as consciousness and its opposite are concerned, there have been extreme views held about them. If we take serious notice of contemporary thought, especially in its biological or psychological mood, we run almost into a dilemma with regard to whether we should or should not believe in consciousness as a fact. In any case there have been honest attempts made to reduce the whole of human experience either to the category of mind in the sense of consciousness or to the category of matter in the sense of pure movement. It is not our concern here to deal with these attempts, as we are not writing a review of tradition or contemporary

thought. We shall take it for granted that consciousness is still surviving, in spite of the fact that it was sought to be totally denied by a contemporary school of psychologists. And our object will be to give an account of it if possible and then decide whether the term "mind" could be used for it or be defined by it.

So far as we are concerned the term "consciousness," like the term "experience," should be used for the whole of anything that ever did or could form the subject-matter for belief, opinion or thought. Whether we believed in a human being or an animal or a tree or a stone, there is no reason why we should not call each and every one of our beliefs by the name of experience or an instance of consciousness. The belief, as we say, may be more or less certain, or more or less clear and distinct; what we call its subject-matter, again, may be anything from the unverifiable scientific hypotheses to the equally unknowable, mystical verities. But as it will or can never cease to be belief, in spite of the variations and changes in its fortune, it will not lose its primal sense of what we have called consciousness; we do not see how any philosopher or psychologist could get away from this fundamental truth about human experience, belief and consciousness. Could it ever so happen that our philosophers literally ceased to be truly conscious just at the moment when they so exultingly professed a faith which denied consciousness altogether? We doubt very much if they did, for at least their judgement about consciousness did not fail to reach us in spite of its open hostility to consciousness. They must have failed to reduce themselves to sheer mechanical existence which, at least, was supposed to mean or imply a cessation of all communication. Or if they did become pure matter or movement, which was supposed only to register shocks or influence from the outside world, such desperate states somehow must have done service for all that consciousness alone was reputed to do. The distinction between pure movement which made com-

munication impossible, and consciousness which made it possible was therefore gone, and our psychologists must have been really and truly behaving as steady, conscious individual centres, though their speech or writing sought hard to create the opposite impression, that they were not.

But it may be legitimately asked, why did they at all take it into their heads to repudiate consciousness when every expression of their opinion was fully conscious and could be, in their opinion, distinguished from what we are familiar with in our contact with stone and tree, etc. If the distinction between consciousness and its opposite arose on the ground that while a human being reacts to us in one way, a stone or a tree reacts in the opposite way, why should it have been held, as if we were all either in the same state and position as the trees and stones, or altogether in the more exalted and dignified state of human beings? How on earth, a desperate critic may ask, could we go outside that distinction once we had made it? It seems obvious that once we thought and believed that we were human beings diametrically opposed to a stone, we could not possibly, as human beings, abdicate from that position and behave as a stone.

And yet if the distinction between the human being and the stone as it was understood by tradition did not quite satisfy the human mind, there must have been an explanation for it. If the human mind and stone could not but be taken as distinct, and yet if it was difficult to believe that they were so distinct as to be called conscious and its opposite non-conscious, or movement, could not one suggest an explanation of that anomaly?

We believe that an explanation can be suggested, and the main clue to it will be found in the nature of belief or experience itself. The issue really turns on the nature of the subject-matter of belief. In other words, we have to ask the question whether belief is a dual fact constituted by what has been called a process of knowing or believing on the

one hand and an object which is known or believed. Tradition, so far, faithfully recognized both the factors and we do not know whether it quite succeeded in giving a consistent account of it. We hold that belief is not a dual fact. There is no such thing as either a process of believing or an object that is believed, in the sense tradition so far held. We shall soon have the chance of dealing with this position at great length.

But the point that we want to make from this denial of the accepted analysis of belief is that the way in which we make the distinction between a human being and a stone has no foundation in fact. If belief is not a dual process or fact but a strictly unique and singular fact, there is nothing to choose between a belief in or experience of a human being and belief in or experience of a stone, as human experience. In other words, if John, for instance, is supposed to have either of these two beliefs, John may be called both by the name of human being or stone. So that if the term "consciousness" could or should be used for belief, we should call both these experiences of human being and stone instances of consciousness and repeat the suggestion that John is both human being and stone.

We do not suggest that the theory of knowledge or belief on which we are basing our claim about consciousness is easy to follow, or may not be disapproved by the philosophers. We are prepared to believe that it might appear to be sheer nonsense to many, especially to those who are completely satisfied with what they have been professing for years. But we do not offer it as a tentative scheme; we offer it as the only conceivable theory, as the later discussions will amply bear out. In the meantime, the question is that if John is found to be both human being and stone, if there is nothing to choose between the two instances of experiences, John as human being and John as stone, will there be any point in calling the one by the name of consciousness and the other by the name of non-consciousness?

If we are prepared to hold that John is nothing if not an instance of consciousness, even perhaps while he is fast asleep, how could we escape the conclusion that his experience of stone which represents himself just as much as his experience of arguing with Smith does, must be an instance of consciousness too? And if that means that all the stones in at least John's experience are bound to cease to be stones of the quarry and become conscious centres, perhaps that was just what ought to happen to them.

It may be asked, however, what would happen to the stones of the quarry? We are afraid we shan't find an answer to this question in the whole of tradition. The stones that philosophers have been talking about are of the kind which John's experience embodied, they are literally Philosopher's stones. As far as we know they did not refer to any other stone. As a matter of fact, they repudiated the idea of putting the stones in the quarry, as some people suggested that they should be, and all this happened simply because they were supremely anxious to preserve what they regarded as the chief feature and pride of the human mind —the function of knowing. It meant really nothing to them whether the stones in the quarry were preserved or not, so long as the human claim or capacity to know them was preserved.

But it is possible that one may succeed in preserving both John's experience of the stones and the stones in the quarries. As we come to develop our theory of knowledge, we shall have opportunity to show that the stones of our experiences and the stones in the quarries are altogether quite different things. They never come together, nor have they anything to do with each other, except by way of referring to one another, which is a very different method of cultivating intimacy from what has been known as interaction or interpenetration or representation. Here is a clear departure from the whole of tradition, whether it is Eastern or Western as far as we know, and we do suggest that it was only such a clean

departure that could preserve both the stones of the quarry and the stones that human experience embodied. We shall soon see why this departure was essential.

In the meantime let us make it quite clear that if we have to deal with the stones which human experiences embodied, there is no reason why we should not call them instances of consciousness just as we do the emotions, or the human lungs, or thoughts, which equally form the subject-matter of human experience. In so far as John's experience of stone is John himself, that stone is just as conscious as any thought of Smith or emotion in John's experience might be.

Perhaps it is this truth or fact which the latest school of psychologists which grew out of interesting experiments with some of our still surviving animal ancestors, meant to formulate in their rather uncalled for anxiety to deny consciousness altogether. There is certainly a good deal of reasonableness in the suggestion that if we distinguish between some part or portion of our experiences and others, and classify them as instances of consciousness or its opposite, we do so without any evidence whatsoever. The fact is that they are all the same whether they appear in the form of stone or human being. And it is immaterial whether we call them instances or consciousness or its opposite. Naturally there need be nothing atrocious in the suggestion that consciousness does not exist. Such a suggestion could be equally interpreted as meaning that what we call the opposite of consciousness does not exist either. So long as we bear in mind the truth or fact that as subject-matter for the experiences of the human mind there is nothing to choose between a human being and a stone, the extreme claims like—there is no consciousness, or, there is nothing but consciousness—do not very much matter. They need not be taken too seriously.

But it does not follow that a claim that all experience, whether of a human being or stone, should be called instances of consciousness, does not stand in need of evidence.

It is one thing to say that all experiences are of the same kind and therefore, if the term "consciousness" is to be used for human experience at all, it should be used for both a human being and a stone, quite a different thing to claim that the term "consciousness" should be reserved for such experiences. One has still to show why the term "consciousness" should be used at all, and the proof in the last analysis will mean some kind of definition or description of consciousness as well as a positive indication of what may serve as its contrary. It is necessary that we must explain what we mean by consciousness in addition to our claim that consciousness should be used as a quality or feature of all beliefs and experiences. We must equally explain what is meant by the non-conscious. And then we shall have the chance of asking the question whether the term "mind" could be used for consciousness or not.

There are two points to be discussed in connection with the question of defining and describing consciousness:

(*a*) Why do we at all keep the term "consciousness" in use? What kind of experience or existence does this term distinguish?
(*b*) What are the conditions in which the experience we call consciousness appears?

We shall find it easy to answer both the issues if we for a moment go back to the distinction that we have made already between what we have called the historical and mystical features or states of the individual centres. If we call to our mind again the fact that the individual centre appears in both multiple and simple universes, we ought to see at once that there were enough conditions in the multiple universe to give rise to the feature of consciousness. The reason for such a growth is that the multiple universe where the individual centre appears is full of conflict and harmony, and nothing but conflict and harmony. And it cannot be questioned that the existence of the individual

centres means that they must refer to one another as complementaries and contraries, and also to the Actual Reality which they are supposed either to doubt or affirm. In fact there is bound to be enough of discrimination and distinction in the career of the individual centres to create just the right *milieu* of consciousness. Perhaps it may be taken for granted that there is an intimate connection between the situation where the distinctions and differences appear, and the phenomenon of consciousness. We see no reason why we should not claim that if conflicts and harmonies alone, which represent distinctions and differences, can serve as conditions for the origin of consciousness, consciousness in its turn cannot but come into life if such conditions were there. And the strength of this argument will certainly improve if we add that a situation which is even conceivably homogeneous, and genuinely nebulous in its proportion, is totally inconsistent with the origin or growth of consciousness. We do, as a matter of fact, hold that the more homogeneous an experience or situation becomes, the less conscious it becomes. Those who talk of levels or grades of consciousness refer to this distinction between the homogeneous and distinct as being responsible for them. They are not prepared to say that the non-conscious or sub-conscious is unreal or non-existent; what they say instead is that they are not capable of being discriminated or distinguished. And the trait which implies the absence of consciousness is also claimed to have marked all those profound experiences which lie to the credit of our spiritual men and women. The term that is very often used under these circumstances is "serene joy," and if anything peculiar is sought to be conveyed by it, it is the note of placidity or profound stillness that is furthest removed from our discriminating consciousness. The artist who made an effort to catch the beauty of this heaven placed it in the deep pool of jade which nestles, unmarked by any eye, in some deeply cut ledge of a mountain system densely shaded

by a tropical bower. In both technical and lay references to experiences which cut their way through the distinctions and differences and reach the homogeneous and uniform, consciousness was denied and in at least some of the instances which were frankly esoteric or mystical, consciousness was deliberately given the lower and less real place. And nobody need doubt that when the human race goes to sleep at night, there is perhaps no trace left in God's creation which may be mistaken either for conflict or harmony, or for what is called the proud, conscious moment of human existence.

But the strictly logical reason why the conscious feature of the individual centre should be distinguished is that the individual centre has to be credited with another feature, which is definitely incompatible with it, and which appears while it exists in what we have called the simple universe. There must be traits in the nature and constitution of the individual centre by which we can distinguish their historical and mystical career. We have to call them conscious if only to show that they are steeped in distinctions and differences. We have equally to call them non-conscious if only to prove that they stand there as a unity. The two terms "conscious" and "non-conscious" are perfectly significant; and there is no reason why we should try to preserve only one of them at the expense of the other. It is not enough that the individual centres should exist as multiple and simple; it should be possible to distinguish them as multiple while they are multiple. The necessity of distinction arises for the simple reason that the individual centre was not simple while it was multiple.

Perhaps we could see the point of this distinction much more clearly if we compare this distinction with that which we have drawn between actuality and possibility, or unity and multiplicity. In our scheme, the same individual centre is called possible and multiple exactly as it is called conscious and non-conscious. And what do the two terms "possible"

and "multiple" imply? The term "possible" implies that the individual centre should be distinguishable from the Actual Reality, while the term "multiple" implies that it is one out of many that are in relation with it. Neither of these two terms gives any sense or suggestion of what is meant by consciousness, in so far as they do not refer to the feature of differences and distinctions. Similarly, the term "simple" implies that the individual centre in question is singular and not dual or multiple. It does not give any suggestion as to what is signified by the term "non-conscious," in so far as it does not refer to unity. So that there is a clear field open for the terms "conscious" and "non-conscious" to cover.

But this theory of consciousness obviously will not tally with the theory of the sub-conscious or non-conscious that we are familiar with, especially in contemporary thought, even if it is not objected to on other grounds.

As far as we know the sub-conscious is supposed to be a degree or stage of consciousness by our psychologists, who do not over-estimate the value of metaphysics. What is sub-conscious at one moment may become conscious the next, if we understand the trend of modern psychology at all. Honestly we are not in a position to judge the value or accuracy of the position, and that for two reasons:

(*a*) Consciousness, perhaps, is understood here in a special sense, especially as it is treated as a subject-matter for experiment. We have nothing to do with consciousness which is less a logical notion and more a scientific hypothesis, and which is expected to yield scientific facts. If, for instance, it is a feature of physiological organism, its truth or falsehood cannot be a subject-matter for enquiry in a metaphysical treatise. So that all that we can say is that before the term "consciousness" is used under such restricted conditions, it is to be expected that the scientist should carefully explain his assumptions. For our part, we have already suggested a definition of consciousness,

and we see no reason why the term "consciousness" should be treated as if it did not imply merely the fact of multiplicity, and the fact of differences and distinctions that it implied. And if this basal meaning of the term is not deliberately waived, we do not see how it could be claimed to be a feature of some strictly specific form of individual centres. So far as we are concerned, we are positive that "consciousness" is the fundamental feature of all individual centres whether they are inorganic, organic, cellular or psychical. It is a mistake to suggest that it belongs only to what we call the human or physiological. It would do us good to know that there was nothing supremely valuable or extraordinary about the human species to deserve being called conscious, at the expense of the rest of God's creation.

(*b*) The other reason why we have to discard the theory of the sub-conscious is that it savours too much of the theory of whole and part or degrees, to tally with what we have suggested as a theory of instances. Consciousness, to us, is unique, and we are prepared to admit that it may have instances. But that is certainly not admitting that it may have degrees too. As a matter of fact, the sub-conscious has a sense to us of instance only, but an instance of consciousness is not the same thing as a degree of consciousness. All instances are equally unique, independent and original, and the notion of degree was only a fiction which popular mind created for its own economy and which was later on elevated to the status of a theory by our wise scientists.

Finally the term "non-conscious," as it has been understood by tradition, has absolutely no sense to us. In so far as we have rejected the position that the stone is non-conscious and mechanical while a human being alone is conscious, we have no use for the traditional view. The mechanical to us stands on the same level as what we have so far called the mental.

But it is a fact that we also draw a line between the conscious and the non-conscious, as we have tried to explain

above. Only the non-conscious is the name in our philosophy for the mystical, unitary and simple state of the individual centre. So that it is not only incompatible with the conscious but can only alternate with the conscious. It is necessary, therefore, that we should dispute the validity of any attempt which seeks to use the term "non-conscious" for anything which falls within the range of what we have called historical experience. It may even be more than a matter of courtesy with us to dispute an insinuation—it is often made —that a high mountain, for instance, is "non-conscious," even though we have no scruple to call it sublime in its height and worship it as the abode of the gods.

Let us hope we have succeeded in making a case for preserving both the terms "consciousness" and "non-consciousness," even though we have attached to them a meaning which is clearly different from what tradition has so far given to them. The question now is, can we use them as a synonym for mind and matter? If it has been possible so far to retain the term "conscious" as meaning or referring to the situation of difference and distinction and the multiple and historical universe in which they appear, can it be used also for what we called mind?

Evidently it cannot be so used, and the reason simply is that we would not come across any trace of matter with which we can compare it, within the historical experience where it appears. As we have just seen, there is no phase or stage of our historical experience which is not saturated, so to speak, with consciousness, precisely because it is the only region where the differences and distinctions appear, and nothing but the differences and the distinctions appear. Even at the risk of being called fantastic, our theories about the inorganic world did not scruple or hesitate to ascribe to them the same feature of consciousness as was ascribed to the peculiarly organic facts called human beings. In other words, what both lay and sophisticated minds were wont to call matter, in connection with the varied and rich

experiences which we have called historical, came to have the same denomination as was ascribed by them to mind. In plain terms, in so far as both what we call cognition, conation and emotion, and sheer, pure movement, whether in running waters or the march of the planets or the endless ways of the firmament, or even the incessant whirls which the scientific constituents of our universe undergo, came to be placed under the same category as consciousness, the traditional distinction between mind and matter disappeared.

And it is no use trying to preserve the distinction by retaining the term matter for what we have called the non-conscious or mystical; for the mystical is incompatible with the historical and exists in a realm all by itself. As it is something which falls beyond what we call knowledge, we can have no dealing with it as we are supposed to have with both mind and matter. If the distinction between mind and matter has to be preserved, it must be preserved in a form which will make an act of dealing with both of them possible. If mind and matter represented the historical and mystical phases of the realm of possibility, we could no longer deal with both together, even in succession. And as it is one of the accepted views of mind and matter that both must be comparable and distinguishable, either both must belong to the historical universe or neither. The terms "consciousness" and "non-consciousness" cannot be utilized for the distinction between mind and matter.

The alternative left to us, therefore, is to find out whether the terms "active" and "passive" could be utilized for preserving that distinction. Is it possible that we shall find what have been called the active and passive phases of the individual centres suited to the requirements of the distinction between mind and matter?

It seems that we can with perfect reason call the active phase of the individual centre by the name of mind, and its passive phase by the name of matter, however strange it

may sound. There is no reason why John, for instance, while he is contradicting or complementing Smith, should not be called mind. On the other hand, it need not be altogether unnatural if Smith at the moment is supposed to be in the state of matter.

And if this view of the distinction between mind and matter is accepted, one may proceed to analyse the significance of this distinction by way of a broad comparison of it with that of tradition.

CHAPTER XVI

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE: PART II, ANALYSIS OF THE SCIENTIFIC CLAIM

More about our theory of matter and mind and a review of the claim of scientific achievement.

THE view that we are suggesting about mind and matter is clearly different from that of tradition, though we too, in the same spirit as tradition did, hold that mind and matter are distinct and cannot be reduced to each other. Our difference from tradition in the main, apart from the definition we have attached to mind and matter, lies in our bold suggestion that mind and matter do not and cannot appear together but only in succession. The individual centre which alone can be mind or matter exists or can exist only as mind or matter. It does not exist as both at the same time, and it is bound to be either mind or matter in succession. And the reason why we hold this view is that we have definitely identified the mental state with its active state and the material state with its passive state. In so far as the individual centre is bound to be active and passive in its relation to other individual centres by turns, it has to function as mind and matter alternately. There can be no question of mind and matter coming into clash in the same identical centre, if only because the individual centre must necessarily be identical and integral.

The mind and matter, according to this view, turn out easily to be the most fundamental features or forms of the individual centre. Whatever other forms or phases the individual centre may assume, they all will have to presuppose these two basal forms. In other words, in so far as the individual centre must appear alternately as active and passive, whether it is in conflict or harmony with the other

individual centres, its inorganic, organic and psychical forms must be supposed to imply or presuppose the mental and material forms. And if we remember that each centre must be either an instance of the possibility of Reality or of the possibility of Nothing, it follows that each instance of the possibility of Reality and the possibility of Nothing must be alternately mental and material. There will not be a nook or corner of the wide universe where mind and matter will not appear. In fact, the ultimate situation of the individual centre must be that in which it exists as mind and matter alternately, implying the five features we have already mentioned. Whatever happens in the continuously or the discontinuously successive series which the individual centres undergo, they constitute nothing but instances of this situation. We never get anything but mind and matter in alternation in the multitudinous instances that arise, whether simultaneously or successively. In other words, the individual centres are either contradicting or being contradicted, or complementing or being complemented. And this is all that one could understand by their being mental or material.

But we do not suggest that the distinction that we have just drawn between mind and matter may not appear to be either insufficient or inaccurate if, for instance, we compare it with the claim made on behalf of mind by the Idealists. In the first place, mind, in our account, is but a phase, and in no way more potent than or superior to matter, which is also a phase. No Idealist will accept the view. And even though, like the Idealists, we too hold that the individual centre is active, it does not suit us certainly to associate activity with causality as the Idealists do. Activity to us is nothing but a peculiar phase or change or function in the individual centre, which is distinct from the equally peculiar phase or change or function which passivity in its turn implies. We hold that both the active and passive phases of the individual centre are mere states or changes and nothing but states or changes. There is

nothing creative or generative about them as the Idealists believed there was about mind.

If A, for instance, is mental and active, that means that A has just the experience of contradicting or complementing, say, B. Consequently B, at the moment, is to be supposed to have the opposite experience of being contradicted and complemented by A. The point to note is that the two states and experiences of A and B, as they are clearly different, arise quite independently and exist as achievements or efforts made to realize a purpose. Nothing passes from A to B and vice versa. There is no such thing as interaction; instead, there is only interdependence, in the sense that they both happen to change simultaneously, and the change is absolutely spontaneous. We do not and cannot uphold the Idealistic view of mind, as we do not believe in what has been called its productive capacity.

Perhaps the same thing may have to be said with regard to our position about matter, if we compare it with the Materialist's claim that matter is the primal cause of everything, not excluding the phenomenon of mind. We are sure to fail equally to satisfy the Materialists, in so far as we hold that matter, like mind, has no generative or productive capacity but should be understood to be only a phase or form of the individual centres.

But the question arises if every existent has to be taken as an instance of mind or matter, consciousness or non-consciousness, what is there to draw a line of distinction between a conscious fact or existent which we call stone, and another conscious fact or existent which we call a human being? It would be the height of impudence on our part if we denied that there was any distinction between them. Even this philosophy, if it is to be called philosophy at all, need not deny it. As a matter of fact, it guarantees that distinction in so far as it provides for successive and simultaneous series of instances. If instances are not repetitions, if they are to be credited with uniqueness and speciality,

stone, tree, dog, and human being may all easily thrive under their beneficent care.

As a matter of fact, by this peculiar philosophic outlook one would expect that many more peculiarities than the few we have so far known would appear. It is by no means necessary to foreclose either their range or depth by strictly drawing a limit round the inorganic, organic or psychical.

Even if it may be a sign of credulity in the twentieth century to believe in the supernatural in any shape or form, our scientists have not quite succeeded in dispelling what they call the mist of superstition in the largest majority of the human race. Nor is it a fact that the vitality of the existing human population is altogether nourished by what the scientists have carefully discovered for the human race; the largest body of human beings live and die as if scientific living never were known. It is a fact which does no discredit to science, that if human vitality had depended entirely for its preservation on scientific knowledge and on the few constructive results that it has given rise to, the human race would long ago have gone down to the grave to "push up the daisies" as the English say. Besides, it is perfectly arguable that the scientific constructions, as they gave rise to concentrated efforts to live luxuriously and feel pompously for the aristocratic few, equally sapped the vitality of that portion of the race which lived to build up that life. The total result of the scientific experiment, again, has by no means been either a widespread beneficence for the human race, or an unmixed chance to make life, even of the minority, both stronger and more stable. Under these circumstances it may be excusable for the philosopher to claim that what is called the supernatural perhaps is not altogether dead, even though the modern age, by devious means, wished its demise. Even if we do not take into consideration the still prevailing human effort to keep the faith in the supernatural alive, either by a form of worship which is based upon what is called philosophic or ethical considera-

tion, or by a form which is distinctly and deliberately esoteric or vibrantly mystical and spiritual, it by no means follows that we should confine our enquiry to the four walls of scientific experiment. The philosophers at any rate would repeat the classical warning—"that way madness lies."

But how is one to find out the distinction between a stone and a human being, even if one assumes that they are at bottom nothing but individual instances in the fullest sense we have attached to that term? Does it or can it really form a subject-matter for the kind of enquiry that we have undertaken?

We have no doubt that there is a clear distinction, but we do not believe that it can be a subject-matter for our enquiry. On the contrary, it is just the subject-matter of enquiry for those who deal with the existent facts, as they are open to observation or experiment. It is commonplace to suggest that a philosophical enquiry can lay down only what is fundamentally true of all instances. It might with reason be argued, for instance, that our duty with regard to the characterization of stone or John ended the moment we laid down what fortunes they are expected to have as constituents of the universe. For philosophic purposes it is enough to know that they have a central end of a particular kind, a particular constitution like mind and matter, relationships like similarity, dissimilarity and opposition, and achieve their end by a definite law.

CHAPTER XVII

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE: PART III, THEORY OF SUBJECT AND OBJECT

Analysis of the theory of knowledge—theory of subject and object and the relation between them—contrast with the traditional view.

To begin with, there are two or three important issues which a discussion of the theory of knowledge must steadily keep in mind:

(*a*) What is the function of knowledge? What is it that knowledge is supposed to aim at?
(*b*) Does knowledge, assuming that it is some peculiar and unique experience, represent the final experience which any individual centre is capable of having? Is it or is it not followed by other experiences which are incompatible with knowledge?

If we start discussing the function of knowledge with a review of speculative tradition, we may easily lose our path in the maze which modern attempts at solving it have so obviously produced. For ourselves, we are honestly diffident about discovering what exactly knowledge means if we go solely by the modern outlook on it, which is undoubtedly very valuable. Perhaps it will not be quite unfair to repeat the comment with regard to knowledge that we have already made on the total achievement of modern philosophy. Obviously the position reached so far has led to nothing so much as to an impasse. We may in consequence make as good a case in favour of the validity or objectivity of knowledge, as in favour of the opposite position that knowledge is not a fact. It would be wise therefore if we start with an account of knowledge as it appears to us, rightly or wrongly, and then proceed to compare it with the diverse accounts that we may gather together from all other quarters.

Knowledge evidently is not a state or experience of what we call stone or tree or cell. Precisely, it is a state or experience of what we call a human being. If the term "knowledge" has to be kept in use, the distinction between the human being on the one hand and physical and biological being on the other has to be kept strictly in view. In other words, it is the human being that must be supposed to have the capacity to know, and not certainly the tree or even the dog or cow.

So that if we want to distinguish precisely the nature of knowledge as the experience of human being, we must discover precisely the distinction between the human being and other beings, such as stone, tree or cow. The issue about knowledge in this sense, therefore, falls outside the scope of this enquiry, as it is strictly and wholly metaphysical. We are not expected here to deal with psychological problems or problems that are connected with physics and biology.

What we are called upon to do principally is to indicate the general features which knowledge as a form and phase of an individual centre is bound to possess. If, for instance, the individual centre has to realize the central end—how exactly would it do so in its peculiar form or phase as knowing? The point to note here is that whatever form may happen to arise in the process or career of knowing, it must be supposed to be in a peculiar conflict or harmony with some other individual centre. After all, the knowing centre is, in the last analysis, either the possibility of Nothing or the possibility of Reality. As such, it is bound to be in clash or harmony with some other centre which must also be, in the last analysis, the possibility of Reality or the possibility of Nothing. The result of their conflict will produce what we have defined as certainty.

These are roughly the universal features which the cognitive process or phase of knowing is bound to imply. And we may try to find out in what form exactly the certainty or uncertainty which is bound to arise as the result of its peculiar conflict and construction, is likely to appear.

The terms that can be safely used for that species of certainty and uncertainty are clearly what we call belief and doubt, and which are well known in psychological experience. It can be safely suggested that the form and phase of the individual centre which is called knowledge, is bound to appear as belief or doubt and nothing else. It is the human individual and not the stone or tree or cow that is expected to be in doubt or belief about the Actual Reality. The stone, the tree and the cow too are also expected to be in the state of uncertainty or certainty, and that as a result of their own special conflicts and harmonies; but it will be a clear mistake to call those states by the names of belief and doubt. It is the peculiarity of the human individual that it cherishes belief and falls into doubt and nothing but belief and doubt. And this peculiarity of the human individual as it appears in belief and doubt may be traced to another peculiarity, that of its possessing percept, image, and concept as its constituent forms. A belief may be simply defined as a conflict between percepts, concepts, and images. And there can be no difficulty in showing that percepts, concepts, and images do constitute the knowing or cognitive individual, and no other individuals that may be contrasted with it.

Similarly, if belief and doubt are to arise as a result of conflict or harmony between one knowing centre and some other individual centre, we should expect four distinct stages marking the course or career of the conflict and harmony between them. The knowing centre will contradict and be contradicted by the other centre, exactly as it will complement and be complemented by the other centre. For instance, if John is supposed to be knowing the mountains in Lapland, John will pass through four stages in his conflict and harmony with that mountain.

We must never forget that neither John, though he has the capacity to know, nor the Lapp mountain, which is supposed not to know, is anything but individual centre

which must bring about the realization of the same end through the same universal process. The mountain does not certainly know, nor does it perhaps live. But that makes no difference to its basal claim to serve the universe or its central end in the same fundamental manner as John, or the tree, or the cow is expected to do. The differences between them are subordinate to their main agreement as to the realization of the same central end.

At any rate, in this philosophy the difference between the inorganic, organic, and psychical entities are not unduly over-emphasized as they have been in all tradition so to speak. While it definitely recognizes them, it cannot forget that at bottom, and most fundamentally, they have the same central end and are subject to the same fundamental law. So that in the last analysis they are but peculiar instances of the same achievement, instead of being ostentatiously higher and more complete, or ignominously lower and less complete forms of it. As a matter of fact, gradation or hierarchy of any kind is frankly ruled out by the scheme of this philosophy. And what is deliberately put in its place may be called absolute equality, which implies that all entities and existents, irrespective of their peculiarities, are independent and unique.

There is no reason why a stone, for instance, should be regarded as achieving less and a human being more of the central purpose which concerns them equally. On the contrary, in so far as they all achieve it in their own peculiar ways, their achievements, as they are all equally essential are also all equally interdependent. It need not be a hyperbole to add that what even a blade of grass can achieve the most gifted of saints certainly cannot, in spite of the fact that they laid claim to miracles for centuries. And nowhere could we possibly come across what has been wantonly described as "freedom," which has been the main test by which to define the superior and inferior status or order among the created or uncreated things of the universe.

But what would happen to John as a knowing or cognitive centre if he is in conflict or harmony with the Lapp mountain which is not a cognitive centre? What changes should we expect to find in John that will lead to the origin of belief or doubt? If John's experience is constituted by percepts, images, and concepts, what form would the conflict and harmony among percepts, images, and concepts take?

We will take an example. John, let us say, is in relation to Smith. (We are here dealing with human centres on both sides.) Suppose the relation is one of conflict. John is trying to beat Smith with a stick. What will happen to John and Smith so far as they, as knowing centres, are concerned? John will have an experience of beating Smith with a stick, and Smith will have an experience of being beaten by John with a stick. We shall have two sets of experiences on two sides—the experience of John will be constituted by a number of percepts: John, stick, Smith, beating. The experience of Smith will be equally constituted by the same number of percepts: Smith, beating, stick, John. And what is especially to be noted is that the grouping of these percepts in John and Smith will not only be different but opposed to one another. In the case of John, they will produce the experience of John beating Smith with a stick, while in the case of Smith, they will produce the reverse experience of Smith being beaten by John with a stick. Smith's experience will be passive, and we may if we choose call it material. And as a matter of course, both will be equally conscious, even as there will be a repetition of the same kind of experience when Smith takes the offensive, so to speak, and has the experience of beating John.

The point to note here is that if we are to describe the knowledge of John and Smith accurately we have to deal with these two different groupings of percepts which are clearly direct opposites. John's knowledge should be strictly distinguished from Smith's knowledge, in so far as John's knowledge will not by any chance include Smith's know-

ledge and vice versa. In other words, they cannot stand in each other's shoes in any sense whatsoever. On the contrary they will live and die as incompatibles. And what may seem perfectly strange though true is that John's knowledge can and ought to be supposed to stand complete in itself, as if it were an independent universe in or all by itself. In literal truth, John really means a kind of experience which is constituted by both John and Smith, however strange it may sound. To suggest that in no sense of the term "Smith" can John by any chance represent Smith, will be a mistake. As a matter of fact, John has somehow Smith in his experience as much as himself, in so far as he is beating Smith. John's experience of beating is not one of beating himself but Smith. This experience of beating Smith cannot be confused with the experience of John himself as he was beating Smith. If you ask John about his experience he will tell you that he, John, was beating Smith and nobody else. He will distinguish between John who was beating and Smith who was being beaten by John. There will be two definite experiences:

(*a*) Experience of himself as John, strictly speaking.
(*b*) Experience of John beating Smith.

It is the latter experience which will constitute Smith for John. Smith here is the object or the reluctant receiver of his blows. He did not exist anywhere outside John. Smith himself, or the real Smith, had no experience of that Smith who was receiving John's unpleasant attention, nor did or could anybody else in the whole world. In truth, Smith, in that sense, is John himself, however ridiculous it may sound. One may almost say that John was beating himself, though he never did so except in a sudden attack of penitence.

Exactly the same thing happens in the case of Smith. Though he has just the opposite experience of being beaten by John, the John in Smith's experience likewise is Smith himself.

The point that we are bringing out here will be more and more clear as we go on. We cannot really help attaching a special importance to it, in so far as it is this view of knowledge, if true, that alone can solve the difficulty that is still hanging fire, for instance, on the score of solipsism. It is expected that it may also clear the perplexing issues about the question of the subject interacting with the objective world, and in all likelihood give an interpretation of the main position of Leibniz too.

In any case, in so far as it shows clearly that no experience in an individual centre is just John or Smith—to go back to our illustration of John beating Smith and Smith being beaten by John and vice versa—each experience has to be taken as complete in itself. If it be a fact that the two experiences are not only different but incompatible, there is no occasion for John or Smith to exchange their experiences with one another, in any sense of the term. What John wanted is the satisfaction that he actually beat Smith, and that satisfaction can well arise even if John had not Smith's experience too on that occasion, i.e. the experience of being beaten. It does not require any special argument to prove that if there was any experience that John did not want to have at the moment, it was exactly Smith's experience.

But John's experience of beating Smith, let us repeat, can appear only in a setting and series in which John, stick, beating and Smith must all appear. In other words, we should expect John to change into all these forms; and there is no reason why John cannot be supposed to change into any form so long as it is not contradictory and does not cut into some other existing individual centre. As we have already seen, the view of identity or individuality that we have explained makes such transformation perfectly intelligible.

The dread of solipsism, as we have just said, does not seem to arise. John is by no means confined to a world in

which no trace of anything but John, in the orthodox sense, can appear; on the contrary, as we have just shown Smith, stick, beating, etc., can and do appear in John. Besides, when they do appear in John's world and complete the range of the universe which John wanted, to his complete satisfaction, no other world has or can have any inkling of them. They are literally part and parcel of John; if John is anything he is not only John but Smith, stick and beating too, to his heart's content. And so with Smith. And is this not the kind of universe that we actually know and deal with?

The question of knowledge at bottom, then, if we do not go any further, does not mean that there is a knowing subject and an object that is known which are supposed to face one another like the two banks of a river. In fact, if we truly want to understand its precise significance, we must go to the fundamental situation which it presupposes. And that fundamental situation is not to be found in knowledge itself as a fact but only in the outstanding fact of relation of conflict or harmony between individual centres. It is these centres, when they appear as percepts, images, and concepts, that are supposed to constitute or give birth to knowledge. What we have to note is that knowledge is conditioned by the basal fact of conflict and construction, which implies a central end, as we have so often repeated.

It will never do for us to forget that we cannot deal with knowledge as if it were an independent or original fact, standing by itself. Nor is it at all unfair to say that the claim that knowledge implied a subject knowing and an object that was known, was neither an adequate nor an accurate account of it. Its main mistake lay in assuming that the subject and object were intimately related so that they could penetrate into one another.

One may still talk about subject and object in terms of the individual centres; one may again talk about subject and object in terms of the active and passive states. But there is one way in which no one has a right to talk and

that is in the exclusive way in which tradition talked about subject and object, or John and Smith. What one has to remember instead is that each instance of knowledge, whether it is John or whether it is Smith, is a strictly composite experience, so to speak, which includes both John and Smith. There never is an occasion when we get in the individual centre which, for instance, John represents, only John appearing or existing exclusively. To be precise, John, as an independent centre, undergoes the full experience of John beating Smith, and never merely that of John. Or more strictly, these all constitute instances of John, and the fact is that it is John alone who has all these experiences and no one else.

So that it is obvious that the object, in a sense, is truly in knowledge, although that object is not what tradition meant by object. It is a mistake to claim that the object of tradition is or can ever be in knowledge. To say that John and Smith appear together or in succession in the same centre is not to repeat the subject-object relationship of tradition. The real Smith exists as the contrary or complementary of John, seriously aloof from him, without the slightest chance of coming together.

The theory of knowledge we have just explained is bound to appear strange to all minds saturated with the traditional assumptions. It is necessary, therefore, that we should state with fullness and precision what features of the traditional conception it definitely runs into. We can think of at least two such features:

(*a*) The definite position that knowledge implies the subject and object in the sense that the object not only exists as object pure and simple, but also somehow becomes the subject.

(*b*) The equally definite position that when we actually know the object, we literally become the object.

Both these positions are mistaken and, to our mind, the truth is that the real object never becomes anything else,

just as the subject in its turn never loses itself in the object. What happens as a matter of fact is that every instance of knowledge refers to some other instance, whether of knowledge or something analogous to it. If, for example, John is an instance of knowledge, John is bound to imply or refer either to Smith or to the Lapp mountains, who in their turn also constitute instances of knowledge or to a dictator or a prophet. And yet this act of referring or implying does not mean that Smith, or the Lapp mountain, or the prophet, in any orthodox sense of the term, come to be incorporated in or identified with John. On the contrary, both John and the dictator are expected to pursue their own peculiar identities, whether as contraries or as complementaries, without let or interference. When we talk about John and Smith implying each other, we only mean that they are expected to undergo changes in a definite manner, actively and passively, in their own individual centres and that as a matter of established necessity. Nothing more is meant or can happen to make John and Smith true instances of knowledge.

It is inconceivable that even a symbol or sign or representation of real Smith would appear in real John or vice versa. On the contrary, they would simply stand out as mutually contradictory experiences or mutually complementary experiences.

And if all that we just said about the relation between John and Smith is taken for granted it follows that tradition was altogether on a false track when it tried to explain and justify knowledge on the assumption of subject-object relationship. It was altogether mistaken when it held that the subject knowing must become the object, directly or indirectly, through the medium of a substitute or representation or symbol or sign of the object.

It follows again that if the foregoing contention about the nature of knowledge is taken for granted, the claim about it as the pre-eminent instance of cosmic evolution

falls to the ground. The supposition that knowledge struck the high-water mark of evolution on the ground that all other instances of dealing with the objective world, compared to it, were inchoate and incomplete, is proved to be totally unfounded. Besides, the exceptional claim that knowledge, unlike any other form of existence not only existed and functioned but had peculiar dealings with every conceivable form of existence, loses all foundation in fact.

It may be suggested, however, that knowledge ceases to have any purpose or end of its own the moment it is relieved of its function to represent or come into direct contact with the objective world. It may even be contended that the fact that it is still conceded the function of referring to it as its contrary or complementary is not sufficient evidence of its possessing an end. Besides, it may be argued that any conceivable end of knowledge could be a desire or attempt on the part of the subject to remove the distance which tradition believed lay between the subject and object. So that if we have to reject the idea of knowledge representing the objective world we may not be able to conceive of any end for it to realize.

Perhaps it was some such belief which might have been responsible for the unusually strange conception that it was not enough that the objective world should exist and fulfil its mission, but that something more and additional should happen to it in the way of its being known. Normally speaking, there is no reason why it should be necessary for the objective world to be anything but its own self. And certainly there should have been no bar to its undergoing changes, which could not possibly imply that it had suffered in its integrity. Change in its true meaning is implied by the identity instead of being forbidden by it, in so far as it does not legitimately imply identical survival. We have worked out the idea at great length.

But it is one thing to fulfil one's own mission according to one's integrity, a different thing to be treated to an

additional event or change in its career after that fulfilment. Yet knowledge, if it meant anything, must have meant exactly such an additional or superfluous occurrence in the career of the objective world. And as we were saying, there was the strange belief that if knowledge could be supposed to have an end at all, that end could lie only in creating that strange occurrence in the career of the objective world. Somehow it was suspected that knowledge would be left altogether without a meaning if it was not allowed to interfere with the integrity or identity of something else which was altogether different from it.

There was almost a dilemma before the traditional mind. It was not possible for it not to recognize that there was such a thing as knowledge which definitely implied that there was both a subject and object. The distinction between the subject and object was apparent if anything was apparent. At the same time, if knowledge was to have a meaning or objective, its only way to achieve that purpose was to give the subject free and full authority to deal with the object. It had to be guaranteed a capacity to penetrate the object which was altogether different from it and make it naturally part and parcel of it. Somehow the object which was there already, or which had already cut its teeth, so to speak, had to be recreated. There was no chance for it to refuse such a rebirth; nor could the whole affair, from beginning to end, be disposed of as mere change. For the object could not afford to change its identity or integrity one bit, as that would instantly imply that the subject did not deal with the object but something else. The problem before the subject was that it must deal with the true and genuine object and at the same time the object must be its own handiwork somehow.

The dilemma is apparent, and we all know how the problem of knowledge arose straight from the very conditions of its origin. It was evident from the beginning that the two assumptions:

(*a*) The subject and object are quite distinct.
(*b*) The subject had the capacity to remove the barrier by *tour de force* and penetrate the object,

did not coincide in the least. There was nothing in the Law of Identity to permit a rebirth or resurrection. Proverbially it is adamant even against repetition.

But why was such a dilemma faced for centuries together? Why was it believed that it was the function of the subject to deal with the object, a function which implied that anomalous position in which the object remained exactly as it was and yet something else happened to it?

We have made an effort to suggest an explanation, and if that is not considered sufficient our historians might offer us one, especially those who refuse to accept the change about the meaning of knowledge that was suggested by Kant.

And we might proceed to suggest what could possibly be the object or end of knowledge if we dissociate it from the objective world, as did Immanuel Kant. Let us state what that end and purpose of knowledge is which has got nothing to do with the representation of objects or a direct or indirect contact with the objective world.

The end, as far as we are concerned, refers directly to the Actual Reality as we have hinted already. The function of knowledge is to realize the central end of the realm of possibility. The existence of knowledge in the universe means that both doubt and belief will arise about the Actual Reality. It is only a special way of neutralizing the Negative and an equally special way of consolidating its certainty.

If knowledge, for instance, had never arisen, there would have been no instance of doubt or belief about the Actual Reality; and that would clearly have meant a peculiar defect or deficiency in the constitution of the universe. If the universe as a matter of course was expected to fulfil all that the category of existence implied, knowledge, as a distinct phase or form of existence, was bound to appear

in it. In the nature of things, knowledge was not only an inevitable and necessary phase, but it had a clear and definite end or goal to realize.

And this fact, by the way, could be taken as evidence if the indisputable claim to existence which one could make on behalf of the human race deserves a defence. If it is permitted to relax for a moment, may we not claim that if God took so much pains to create the universe it was left altogether to the human race to prove its existence?

In any case, it is not necessary that we should tie up the prospects of knowledge with the objective world, as if it never could profess an original motive of its own. The fact is that knowledge is doubt or proof of Actual Reality; knowledge is by no means representation of or direct or indirect contact with the objective world.

CHAPTER XVIII

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE: PART IV, IMMEDIATE AND MEDIATE KNOWLEDGE, ETC.

Theory more elaborately discussed with reference to its implications—sense-perception and conception, immediate and mediate, particular and universal.

THE questions that we have so far dealt with here relate only to knowledge as such. There are certain other questions connected with the theory of knowledge with which we should deal if we want to make our account of knowledge truly complete. At least the three following issues have to be considered:

(*a*) What are the constituents of knowledge? If they are percepts, images, and concepts, what are the questions that arise about them?
(*b*) Is the object of knowledge immediate, or both immediate and mediate?
(*c*) Do we know the particular alone or do we know both the particular and universal?

The issues that have to be dealt with at once bear on the following distinctions:

(*a*) Sense-perception as distinguished from conception.
(*b*) Immediate as distinguished from the mediate.
(*c*) Particular as distinguished from the universal.

As we all know, different schools of philosophy have arisen on the basis of these distinctions. For instance, the Empiricists have claimed that it was sense-perception or sensum or sense-data that really constituted knowledge, while the Rationalists, in direct opposition to them, held that it was the concept, rather than the sensum, and concept alone, that constituted it. Equally there have been earnest philosophic attempts to preserve both of them as constituents of the same

experience. The philosophy of Kant particularly was a distinctly deliberate effort in that difficult experiment. In any case, the whole of speculative history can be easily classified under one or other group of these philosophic systems.

But the differences among these views never were acute enough to affect the main issue—whether there was such a thing as knowledge. All of them without exception had to take it for granted that there was such a thing as knowledge.

Kant alone of all the philosophers had a point of view which meant practically a denial of knowledge as subject-object relationship. While all the others differed as to the nature and constitution of knowledge Kant alone went the whole way to deny that knowledge had anything to do with the objective world.

We have discussed already whether the view that knowledge is a subject-object relationship is correct, with a brief reference to Kant. We shall now deal with the question whether we could with any reason talk about knowledge being immediate or mediate, particular or universal, etc.

To begin with, let us deal with the issue about immediate and mediate knowledge. This is clearly one of the fundamental issues; and here as elsewhere we may not benefit considerably if we make this analysis merely a matter of review of tradition, precisely because the traditional position seems to be a clear impasse.

We cannot evidently know anything, assuming that knowledge means knowledge of the object, without knowing it immediately. At the same time, it would be going against the most obvious of human experiences if we made an attempt to deny mediate knowledge altogether. There is no sense, again, in saying that what we know may fall outside the range of our experience. As a philosopher pointed out, even if we deliberately put a screen between the knowing mind and the object to be known, it would be the screen that we should know and not the object. At the same time, it would be sheer intellectual perversity to

claim that our knowledge or experience can have no reference to anything but to what is directly present to it or embodied in it. The point is that it does not seem that we can get out of the impasse if we resolutely stick to the fundamental theory about knowledge—knowledge implies a subject that knows and an object that is known.

But before we proceed to suggest a way out of this impasse it might be useful if we analyse the ideas of both immediate and mediate knowledge. A precise idea of what is meant or implied by the two terms "immediate" and "mediate" is essential for any attempt at solving the issue that is traceable to them.

The idea of immediate knowledge can hardly be supposed to be consistent or valid. For if we insist on drawing a line between the subject knowing and the object known, we do not certainly get over the difficulty about knowledge which rises straight out of that distinction by simply calling it immediate. For it still remains a fact that what is immediate has to account for the fact of presentation. In other words, it has to show how the difficulties which presentation is bound to imply can be got over. The term "immediate," therefore, may be supposed to repeat all the difficulties that arose in trying to make two such distinct things as subject and object identical.

There is, of course, the celebrated philosophic attempt of the Irish bishop in the seventeenth century to purify knowledge by scrupulously dissociating all objects from it which did not actually depend on the knowing mind or the act of cognition for their existence. It was clearly one of the outstanding ecclesiastical contributions to philosophic thought. And it may safely be argued that what was honestly attempted by the good bishop was perhaps a removal for good of the sense or fact of strangeness and unfamiliarity between the subject knowing and the object known. Somehow it must have been felt by Berkeley that unless the object was made vitally dependent on the cognitive act it could

not be safely incorporated into the main body of knowledge. One almost is reminded of the act of purification. In any case it creates a wholesome feeling to suggest that the object had nothing strange or foreign in its nature to embarrass the possibility of knowledge. But unfortunately the ecclesiastical amendment could not at the same time provide for the other essential fact about knowledge, namely, that the subject knowing must be altogether distinct from the object known. That proved to be a fatal flaw in it.

The main point about knowledge, so far as the whole of tradition was concerned, was that the object, before it was known, had to be there already as a full-fledged object. The function of knowledge was to deal with a real object—an object that had cut its teeth, so to speak. Knowledge was quite a novel treatment to which only a full-fledged object which was already complete and integral could submit. The privilege was not open to anything else, not even to the subject-knowing.

It is another story why such an uncalled-for fate should await the object, which was already a thing by itself. There could be nothing in the identity or nature of the object which could make it inevitable. For ourselves, we are of opinion that the anomalous treatment derives its origin from some false legend in the early days of speculative history.

But do we preserve the object truly if we start by assuming that it had no independent existence of its own? Perhaps the fact was that it had no independent existence; perhaps there was no such thing as the object, except in the imagination of the Realist, or the man or woman who is proverbially surfeited with common sense.

But could knowledge still survive as knowledge if there were nowhere any object for the subject to operate upon? In the absence of a truly independent object, the subject was bound to be altogether inoperative if the assumption about knowledge as subject-object relationship be true. If the Irish bishop still has to be congratulated on having

removed the anomaly of the possibility of knowledge, he must have done so only at the costly expense of knowledge itself. It reminds one of the well-known medical paradox which involved the death of the patient as a sure test of a successful operation.

If, however, we try to save the credit of the Irish bishop by suggesting that the object did not actually lose its integrity by coming into relationship with the subject knowing, it would just be reviving the difficulty of the possibility of knowledge. The mere claim or suggestion that the subject and the object were, as a matter of fact, in relation, instead of being apart, cannot be potent enough to testify to its truth or accuracy even though it is proclaimed in an authoritarian manner.

The issue, on the contrary, would arise at once—could we possibly conceive of such a relationship between two such distinct things as subject and object? What, after all, is left to the meaning of relation, if it is supposed to connect what, by definition, cannot be connected?

Apparently we can either have the subject or the object or both together, provided we do not expect that they should interact with each other. And if knowledge has been defined as implying both the subject and object with exactly that claim of interaction between them, it is not clear enough how the Irish attempt at its solution could possibly hold water.

And it need not be held at this late hour of the day that the Irish bishop did not by any chance include the object definitely in all knowledge. His point, that nothing can exist which is not known, could and ought to be taken to mean that it was in knowledge and knowledge alone that the object could be found. The issue evidently was one of object too, and one may take the liberty of suggesting that the Irish bishop was perhaps not unduly anxious for its suitable habitat and safe location. Perhaps it would be a clear mistake to hold that he was interested in the cognitive act only.

The value and importance of the cognitive act to him seems to have lain or consisted principally in the fact of its giving shelter to the object. It would be interesting to know what Berkeley would have said about the cognitive act itself if somehow it could be proved that the objects were really myths. As a matter of fact, it might be held with some reason that the cognitive act too, according to Berkeley, depended on the object. It could be suggested on his behalf that all knowledge would be found in the object and the object only. Here is a perfectly consistent interpretation of the Berkeleyan position which may be suggested to the orthodox mind. To our mind the bishop really left nothing to choose between the cognitive act and the object. One might truly find it difficult to decide whether he was an Idealist or a Realist or a nondescript who just wanted to state that the ultimate situation was the subject and object in relation. The problem of knowledge in any case stood where it did even after Berkeley had written, and we do not know as yet what is meant by immediate knowledge.

As regards mediate knowledge, which deals with objects that are not directly presented but indirectly presented, the difficulties only multiply. For if knowledge cannot get over the difficulty that is caused by the nature and character of presentation, it does not improve its prospects appreciably by adding one more instance of presentation to its normal proportion.

It is to be taken for granted that the object that is mediately known is object still; that it can be not only distinguished from "Nothing" but from any other mediate object that is or may be known. It is perfectly arguable that there is a realm or world of mediate objects. And unless one holds that somehow both the worlds are presented to the subject knowing, the chances are that it would be impossible to distinguish them from Nothing.

In any case the necessity of presentation stands and cannot be got rid of, whatever the nature of the world might

be. But as by definition the mediate world cannot claim direct presentation to the subject knowing, it follows that its presentation must take place in an indirect way. One is reminded of the outer courts of the medieval Royalties and the Church dignitaries, where the humble folk were presented. The idea of the screen, again, by a contemporary philosopher, that we have already referred to, just brings out the nature of that presentation. The mediated world had to be presented to the immediate world if it cannot be presented to the subject knowing. One has to believe that if God, for instance, or the other side of the wall or the past and the future of human history or the physical world are to be known, they must be presented to those whom or which we know directly and who and which, like this side of the wall or the present moment, are directly presented to us. In some sense or other, such a view about the mediated world must have been held by those who did not discard it as a myth.

Besides, it was from such a belief, by the way, that the cult of the prophets and mediators might be supposed to have grown. Similarly, all those ideas in human experience like, for instance, testimony, mediation, etc., become quite intelligible if we view them in the light of this belief. The fact is that the range of direct human experience is very small indeed. So that we have to live mostly on indirect experience and knowledge. What is called trust, confidence, testimony, word of mouth, and all the virtues which came to be known as moral in the course of history, e.g. honesty, straightforwardness, etc., all had to be defined and emphasized simply because our direct experience was limited. They all at bottom implied that there was such a thing as the mediate world, and as for that world direct presentation was impossible, we have to make sure about their indirect presentation or presentation to the direct or immediate world.

But could we really attach too much importance to this scheme of double presentation, however it might insidiously

have worked its way into not only our intellectual schemes about the universe, but also into our practical schemes and social orders in which we are supposed to live, move and thrive? Because we have decided with firmness and hope that we should believe in God on the strength of testament alone, did it follow necessarily that God existed? Similarly, it is just possible that the information which this side of the wall seems to give us about the other side may be just as difficult to believe as the existence of God, if we are to take it on mere testimony. Neither a human being nor a stone wall need be supposed capable of having contact with objects or beings to which the knowing subject is directly and frankly suspected to be incapable of reaching. Whatever deficiency or limitation may be supposed to characterize the knowing subject is bound equally to affect the stone wall or the human being, which or who is supposed to serve as a reliable witness.

The point is that if we are prepared to deny the possibility of presentation of any object to the knowing subject we shall have to deny the possibility of its presentation to any object or being. The theory of the mediated world, or indirect presentation, therefore, cannot be maintained if we want to make a logical theme of it.

We can well afford to hold it if we try to make a pragmatic scheme of it, for the essence of pragmatism, it seems, is to turn anything and everything to a successful use. Its greatest achievement naturally, we are told, lay in its remarkable success in making even of falsehood a useful material. The doctrine itself might have arisen from the stressed perception that this world which invariably staged falsehood along with truth could not have meant that falsehood should dissipate as waste. The finer spirits of that school might have felt that there must have been some meaning in the events of life which produced falsehoods. Here might be found, if we dig deep enough, a new theory of conflict, which after all is the source of falsehood just as much as it is the origin of what we call wrongness.

But so far we have seen only attempts made by vigorous experiments to utilize those experiences which do not come up to the level of truth or strict consistency or true significance for a special purpose. Almost chronologically the pragmatist began just where the logicians left off. They had to repudiate the search after truth and replace it by the search for utility, or to refashion for use and utility the different types of instances of falsehood which were deliberately thrown out as nonsense by the intrepid logician.

We shall not wait here to judge the consequences of the pragmatic attempt. Some of the consequences are obvious enough. We have got nothing, by now, but probability in the intellectual world in the place of truth; and what is called propaganda or management in the practical world in the place of straight dealing and honest attempt to meet the situation as a whole. What these consequences have meant both for stability and order in the intellectual world we know but too well. It will be our care to review them when we are dealing with the ethical issues.

In the meantime we have to discard both the immediate and the mediate worlds in the sense in which they have been understood so far, and precisely on account of the difficulties which are mainly connected with knowledge as such. If we discussed the question of presentation it was to show how the main difficulty of knowledge comes out all the more vividly in the idea of the direct and indirect presentation.

But what have we to say about immediate and mediate knowledge ourselves? If we have preserved knowledge too, is it not necessary that we should preserve the distinction between immediate and mediate knowledge as well? As a matter of fact, we do; and how we do preserve the distinction will be apparent if we keep in view two things, our theory of knowledge and the source or origin of the realm of possibility where knowledge appeared.

If it is taken for granted that knowledge is but an instance

of conflict or harmony between individual centres which represent the possibility of Reality and the possibility of Nothing, and if its object is to produce doubt and belief about the Actual Reality, the distinction between mediate and immediate knowledge may be identified with the distinction between knowledge as such and knowledge of what it refers to. Knowledge is immediate in the sense that it is unique and particular. There is nothing in it or about it which could be called a quality or character in the sense in which those words have been understood by tradition. On the other hand, knowledge is mediate in the sense that it refers to other instances of individual centres which stand as contrary to it or complementary to it. In neither case does the question of presentation arise at all; and relation, by the way, has no sense except that it implies that there is not only a multiple universe but a universe in which multiple centres change in a definite way, according to pre-established necessity. Besides, knowledge refers not only to the conflicting and complementary centres which are simultaneous with it; it also refers to the Actual Reality which is either doubted by it or believed by it. All such knowledge, i.e. about the contraries or the complementaries and Actual Reality, is mediate in the sense that they do not appear in knowledge at all. The individual centre that is knowledge has nothing of them in it. It only refers to them.

So that however strange it may sound, we not only do not know—to talk in the style of tradition—God, or the past and future, or the other side of the wall, we do not know even this side of the wall, or John, or the present state or mood of our direct neighbours. In other words, knowledge if it is anything must be strictly and absolutely self-centred, unique and self-sufficient. Whatever it is, it is that and nothing else. And it makes no difference whether past or future, stone or tree, dog or man enter into it. It is immediate and unique and that without a fault.

At the same time there is or can be nothing that we do not

or cannot know. As we have already shown, every instance of knowledge is a universe in itself, so to speak. In so far as it is a case of actively contradicting or complementing or being passively contradicted or complemented, it represents in itself a complete universe. For instance, John as an instance of knowledge represents John beating Smith, or being beaten by Smith—to refer to our old example. John and Smith, in a sense, both appear in the centre as John's knowledge. One can in the same way talk about tree, stone, dog or any human being, as we are talking about Smith in John's knowledge and experience. There is no reason why we should not include God or the remote and distant planets, or the other side of the wall, or the past and future. Once the question of presentation is taken out of knowledge no object need create a difficulty, whatever its character might be. If Smith appears in John's knowledge or experience in the way we have alluded to, it is not because Smith is present in or near John, or is acting within easy reach of John. The real Smith never moves from his centre, never becomes John in any sense of the term; on the contrary, John and Smith live and die either as opposites or as complementaries. The appearance of Smith in John's experience is due to the same reason as that to which their simultaneous existence in the relation of conflict and harmony is due. So that there is no bar to John's knowing, in our sense, either Smith or any object or being. On the contrary, he is bound to know everything and everybody sometime or other and in some phase or form of them.

Besides, if it be a fact that John has actual experience and knowledge—it does not matter what form it takes, God for instance—that is sufficient evidence that there is a God in the universe who at that time must have stood in a relation of conflict or harmony with John. This is not exactly ontological argument but, to our mind, it is the strongest possible argument on behalf of divine existence. It does not follow that the term "God" must mean all that

it has been taken to mean: one may, as a matter of strict enquiry, give it a more consistent and proportioned significance than what it has been made to bear in traditional thought. But there can be no question that if this theory of knowledge is true, not only the existence of man, with whom we are supposed to communicate, but also the existence of all objects and beings who cannot communicate with us can be proved beyond doubt. If we have, for instance, an experience of a tree in a state of conflict or harmony with us, the tree must be supposed to have an experience of us in its own way; and it makes no difference whether we have the experience of communication with the tree or not.

Experience of communication is an experience by itself. Knowledge, as such, is not necessarily affected by it. If knowledge refers to the tree or God or the other side of the wall, it implies only that at the moment we have an experience of that tree or God or the other side of the wall there is tree or God or the other side of the wall who or which has the opposite or complementary experience or knowledge of us as the case may be. There may or may not be an experience of communication between the centres concerned. And if we keep in mind that an experience of communication is an experience by itself, even a knowledge of past and future comes to be quite intelligible according to this theory. If, for instance, we think of Bach or Beethoven, who lived in the eighteenth century, it means that at the moment, Bach and Beethoven are having experiences about us. We have no hesitation in drawing this conclusion about Bach and Beethoven however strange it might sound. What we have to note is that Bach and Beethoven, when they lived, represented unique individual centres; and if, by the main position of our philosophy the individual centres are supposed to be permanent and fixed, in the sense that each and every one of them was bound to change into a definite and successive series, the question of immortality can very well be associated with the individual centres.

Bach and Beethoven of the eighteenth century can never reappear, but fresh phases and forms of the individual centres they represented are bound to exist in the twentieth century. And the experiences which we are having about them in the twentieth century will correspond to those twentieth century forms and phases. It is conceivable that in the future we may have experiences of communication too, and then we may be assured by Bach and Beethoven that they, too, were thinking of us.

Our issue about the individual centre and its forms, again, may be easy to understand if we just think for a moment of an individual whose continuous career has been communicated to us. For instance, we cannot believe that we did not exist even for a moment since we were born; and though it is pretty certain that we shall have to die some time or other, it would not surprise us altogether if somebody actually suggested that we should live for two hundred years, instead of dying at the average age of seventy or eighty. There are authentic cases where people lived for more than a couple of centuries, just as there are cases where people lived even though their hearts stopped beating and they were buried underground. Conceivably, the life of even a particular form of existence may run over a long span. The historical individual centre, John or Smith, is found actually to have a series of forms. Why should there be any difficulty in thinking of individual centres that began with the determinate universe and would not come to an end so long as that universe survived? How then could such a view be found difficult to believe, simply because we have no experience of communication or the chance of verifying it? If we believe that we were born and lived as infants, cannot we believe that we had another infancy or nativity when the world began? Is it necessary that we should count our age or individuality in terms of the historical series where, as it is said, verification is possible?

It is another issue to find out what such a view can mean

from the point of view of its adding to human problems or diminishing the severity of those problems. We shall discuss that issue when we discuss the different conceptions of the ethical problem. In the meantime, the point that we are making follows logically from the nature of knowledge as such. If knowledge is but a phase of an individual centre and must imply other individual centres in a relation of conflict or harmony with it, every instance of knowledge must imply a corresponding instance of either knowledge or something analogous to it. If we have an experience of God in some form or other, we have to believe that not only there was God, but that God in relation to us was having an experience about us. And if we have no experience of communication with God, that does not mean that we have not the experience of God. The same thing may be said about tree or stone or the other side of the wall or the past and future individual centres.

We admit that the conclusion seems to be rather unusual, but we have to draw it as a matter of necessity as it follows from our main position which we cannot dispute. Besides it appears to be much more satisfactory and encouraging than the traditional view which is neither logically consistent nor by any means of very much use. Death, after all, to refer to a long conviction, is only a prolonged doubt, and that if not untrue ought to silence the rest of the difficulties that may be raised against our claim to immortality. We cannot help holding that knowledge is a sufficient evidence for anything that could conceivably exist or be real.

CHAPTER XIX

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE: PART V, THEORY OF TIME

Theory of the describable and indescribable—theory of past, present, and future or Time—relation between Time and percept and images.

THE next issue that has been mixed up with knowledge is the equally uncertain issue of the particular and universal. It has been held that our knowledge is constituted by the particular alone, even as it has been claimed that knowledge is knowledge of concepts or universals and nothing else. The difference between the particular and the universal again has been drawn on two main counts:

(*a*) The particular is indescribable, while the concept is describable.

(*b*) The particular is unique and its own instance, while the concept or the universal is common to more than one particular, i.e. it is supposed to have instances.

The best way to deal with this feature of the theory of knowledge, therefore, would be to begin with an analysis of these two claims.

The distinction between the describable and the indescribable might have arisen on the ground of the nature of judgement as it has hitherto been understood. In some form or other a distinction had to be made between that which is actually described and the description itself. It was claimed that whenever we make a statement something is assumed as the subject-matter of that statement. And that something, it was definitely asserted, does not enter into the sphere of the statement or the description itself. For instance, if we suggest that such and such a person is alive or dead, or such and such a mountain is high or low, we do not draw either the mountain or the person into the descrip-

tion. Some peculiarity or individuality remains over as what is called the presupposition or implication of the description.

There have been philosophers who held that the whole of the universe itself actually formed the presupposition of any judgement or statement that ever was made. Schools of philosophic thought arose thousands of years ago which definitely claimed that no description or statement could possibly touch the core of the ultimate Reality, which was, in the nature of things, indescribable. On the other hand, artists and poets invariably felt that behind all the vivid and tense expression that art or poetry could ever command, there always remained something over, which, as it were, gave a support to them and formed their nucleus but never came into the picture or the poem itself. In psychology and logic philosophers have drawn what is known as the distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. What they seem to have meant by this distinction was that we know the particular in a different way from the manner in which we know the attributes or relations of the particular. The two instances of knowledge are altogether different in so far as they deal with different features of the real. That which is real and exists as a matter of fact is the particular, and it can be known only by acquaintance. On the other hand, that which characterizes the Reality is the concept and it can be known only by description. There have been philosophers, again, who denied that the concepts or characteristics are or can be real. Equally there have been philosophers who firmly held that the fact or the existent is nothing but a system of concepts or relations.

Here, as elsewhere, the total result seems to be the same impasse; and if we truly want to preserve the distinction between the two notions of the describable and indescribable, we have to find a fresh interpretation of it.

To begin with, it does not seem possible that the indescribable could be taken as a quality or feature of human experience. If there is any meaning that we can attach to human or historic experience, that meaning must be intellig-

ible and clear, i.e. it must be describable. That which is indescribable, if it be a fact, is just what we have to leave altogether beyond the pale of what we call historic or empirical experience.

There are experiences, one may readily grant, which it is almost impossible to express even to oneself, much less to communicate to others. We may literally fail to convey them to others through any medium that we have so far known. Some of the deepest experiences of the human mind are notoriously of that description. For ourselves, we frankly own that we have not so far succeeded in giving any linguistic or artistic shape to what we value as the richest feature of our own experiences.

But it does not follow that we must believe that the experience in question could not in the nature of things be described, or did not stand somehow expressed as it was. The fact that we talk about it is evidence enough that it is not the surd or the pure negative, which is inexpressible by nature. On the contrary, we know that we are entirely filled by it when it takes possession of us; it is not even possible that any other experience should live side by side with it. It is not only most intensely real but compels us to go back to it time after time, whatever that might mean. Are all these features evidences that it is indescribable or the surd, or Nothing by its nature?

And why should it be necessary that it must admit of being translated into other media, as if there were no other way than translation to justify its existence? If it was sufficient for it to exist by itself, could we not suppose that it might have had literally its own unique medium of expression?

It is a fact, again, that experiences by nature have clearly two distinct, contrasted tendencies:

(*a*) To be more and more exclusive or intensely and intimately self-centred.

(*b*) To be more and more varied in expression or more and more expansive.

We sleep, for instance, for half the time we live, which is one simple and honest way of calling ourselves off from the known and usual practice of vividly expressing ourselves to others. It would be an interesting enquiry to find out what would have happened to the human race if this universal practice of retiring from one's neighbourhood had been suddenly brought to a close or had never been open to it. We have some taste anyhow of what is meant by sleepless hours and even sleepless nights and days. A long, continuous wakefulness, if that were possible, as the night has in the abode of the polar horizons, might well have meant for the human race complete loss of the power or capacity of social existence. It is a fact that we live, if only because we have the chance to vary our experience or expression as we like.

Why should not some of our experiences then remain uncommunicated in the usual sense of the term, so that they could be enjoyed and tasted as intensely intimate and peculiar, like the celebrated fruit which ripens just for a brief moment in the dead of night and must necessarily be tasted precisely at that very moment?

The point is that the distinction between the describable and the indescribable is relative. There is nothing in our experience which is or can be called absolutely indescribable. There are and can be different degrees or shades of describability. In no case could there be experiences which imply a particular which is indescribable or a universal which is describable. Even if we have to analyse experiences into two features, both of them are bound to be describable though in different degrees. For instance, if we say, following traditional logic, John is honest, it need not be supposed that we must mean that John is something quite distinct from honesty in the sense that while honesty of John is a description or a concept and therefore describable, John, who is the presupposition of that concept or characterization, must be its opposite and therefore indescribable. No doubt there is a distinction between that which is character-

ized and the character or description itself. There will be no sense in suggesting that John is another name or synonym for honesty or that the statement in question did not imply at least two distinct ideas, honesty and John. Similarly, if the two ideas, John and honesty, were not somehow related, there would be no point in claiming that the statement "John is honest" is significant and real. All this can and must be granted. But it does not follow that character and description must necessarily be of an opposite nature to the subject-matter to which it is related. The term John which is supposed to serve as the subject in traditional logic may well be of the same character and nature as honesty, which is taken as its predicate. If the notion of honesty was describable, what is called its subject-matter must be describable too. As a matter of fact, the difficulty of attributing exactly the same status or reality to John and honesty arose from the simple fact that it was almost universally believed that honesty was a concept which was bound to be common to many instances, while John was a percept or particular which could not be shared.

Sometime or other, the discovery was made that there were things or facts which were unique and particular, exactly as there were things or facts which were common or general or universal, i.e. existed in either indefinite instances which were all different from it, or universally in every conceivable existence. It is this discovery more than anything else which is really at the bottom of the distinction that was made between the particularity or indescribability of John and the universality or describability of honesty.

The difficulty about the particularity or indescribability and universality or describability, therefore, can be removed if only we can re-interpret this discovery. If it can be shown that honesty is not universal in the sense that it did actually exist in more than one instance, John and honesty may be found to be of the same character, i.e. either particular or

universal, or both describable or both indescribable. The issue is not whether we can or ought to make a distinction between the character of John and John, between the description of John and John himself, but whether we can discover a different meaning of the notion of character or description from what has so far been claimed for it, as distinguished from the particular.

Tradition, right up to contemporary thought, has practically failed to explain how the universal and the particular could be accommodated at the same time in the same individual centre, since it assumed on the whole that they are incompatible. Whether we take the extreme view which chose to deny either the particular or the universal, or the moderate view which sought to preserve both of them, the claims about the particular and the universal either remained unsatisfied, or were periodically nullified or smothered in logical phrases or devices like the "concrete universal," or "unity in difference." Even those bolder attempts which tried to give the universal the generative power to transform itself into the concrete particular did not overtake the fate of what is called the Hegelian heroic —the capacity of producing the contrary. The unfortunate fact is that the individual and the universal are still barring the way to all speculation and practice, except while we are in the mood, under adverse pressure, to defy and deny the laws of thought or reality.

And it is a fact that we do seem to deny or defy the laws of thought. Call it a paradox if you like, the laws do seem to be wantonly violated by the human mind. As if, as the humorist put it, one of the main conditions of successful living is periodic practice of self-deception, or high treason at the cosmic bar.

We have to reinterpret the distinction between the universal and the particular, or the describable and indescribable.

To find out the meaning of the ideas of particular and

universal and to discover the nature of the relation between them is to analyse the nature of the individual centres which constitute the discontinuous universe. Particularity and universality must be associated with the multiple centres which constitute the universe. It is these centres and these alone that can be particular or universal. Let us discuss once again what these centres are.

Each individual centre as it is unique and independent has its identity wholly constituted by what we may call a phase or form. It is nothing but a phase or form.

For instance John or Smith as an individual centre is a phase or form of either cognition or conation or emotion. We cannot say that John or Smith is cognition or conation or emotion; we have to say that both of them constitute different and unique forms and phases of them. In other words, John or Smith thinks or feels or wills in a peculiar way. They are nothing but peculiar instances of phases.

The implication behind this theory is that cognition, conation, and emotion form so many series by themselves. Cognition, for instance, never appears or exists as one individual or singular instance. It exists as a series. There is no other way in which cognition can exist or appear. Our theory of similars ought to have made all this clear enough.

The individual centres, therefore, can exist only as a form or phase or instance of the series. If we take cognition, for example, we should expect that John, Smith, Lindsay, Marrett, etc., all will represent a particular instance of it. If you want to know what cognition is, you will have to explore the whole region where all the individuals live, move and have their being.

But the individual centre is not merely an instance of a series like cognition, conation, and emotion; it forms a series of its own as well. As the universe is bound to work out both the relationships such as simultaneity and succession, the individual centres are bound to be what may be

called foci of two series. Each individual will form a series by itself to represent its continuous career of succession exactly as it will be an instance of a series like cognition or conation in direct relationship with other individual centres. The latter will work out his career of simultaneity.

If, for instance, John is a master-dictator at any moment, it means that John is in relationship with Smith and Lindsay, etc., who are all together with him, existing either as master-dictators or master-democrats. It also means that there was a past record of John which preceded his master-dictatorship, perhaps master-gardener or master-agriculturist, even as there will be a future record in which he might function as a master-servant with service to the great and small as his only occupation.

There are two essential features in individuality:

(*a*) One by which the individual is linked up with every other individual, either in similarity or in conflict or harmony.
(*b*) One by which it preserves its continuity.

By virtue of the first, no individual can escape relationship in spite of its uniqueness or originality. By virtue of the second, no individual is without an inescapable continuity. As there is no reason to confuse Lindsay or Smith or Himalaya Mountains or Brahmini Bull, or ignore their perpetual clashes and squabbles, so there is no reason to deny that they all are immortal. To summarize the account we have just given of the individual we may say that we have to make three distinctions in forming an accurate idea of individuality:

(*a*) Individuality is to be understood in terms of function and ideal.
(*b*) Individuality is to be understood in terms of continuity and simultaneity.
(*c*) Finally, individuality is also to be understood in terms of its being a phase or form.

We discussed the first feature when we distinguished between the centre as such and its end or ideal. The distinction between historical and mystical, or the percept and image, function and ideal, all came out as a result of that discussion. When we talked about phase or form of cognition, conation, emotion, etc., we meant by cognition, conation and emotion—function; and this fact of function involved ideal and image and concept.

And if the foregoing account of the individual centre is taken for granted, the term "particular" may be used for any existent form or phase of the series which constitutes an individual centre, and the meaning that it will then bear will consist in the simple fact that the form in question is unique, original and independent. Particularity will imply that the form in question cannot be taken as a mere effect of some cause, or the result of a deductive process, or the manifestation of some principle, or simply an instance of what is known traditionally as class. The identity that the form in question will derive from its particularity must be regarded as immaculate and should by no means be confused or mixed up with the identity of any other form or phase.

Equally the term "describable" may be used for the individual which is particular; and the reason for this strange or unusual use is that the form and phase which constitutes it is bound to have instances on its own account.

If John, for instance, exists as a particular individual at any moment, John must be functioning in a particular way. That particular function will constitute John's form or phase at the moment. It may be eating or drinking or fighting or making a speech, or praying. John, therefore, must be taken as perfectly describable, if only because his function at the moment—eating or praying—was bound to be only one instance of a long series. If John ate and prayed, so did Smith and many others who were individuals like him.

The point to note is that just as John formed a series as an individual centre, so every form and phase which constituted

that series formed a series on its own account. We have all the time two distinct types of series to deal with:

(*a*) The series which constituted the individual centres.
(*b*) The series which constituted the forms and phases.

The term describable simply means that any form or phase of John has a series to its credit. Similarly the meaning of form and phase is that it is describable.

There is no reason therefore why one should not conclude that John is both a particular and describable. And it need not be a matter of regret that the surd or the indescribable particular of tradition drops out if this theory is correct. In its place, its direct opposite, the describable particular appears.

But could not the notion of the universal and indescribable be retained too, in the same way in which we have re-established the particular and the describable? Can it be shown that like the particular, the universal, too, has a meaning which can be derived from the same fundamental structure of the individual centres?

If we go back again to the scheme of the individual centres, we shall find that they were all equally subject to one single law in the course of their steady and necessary evolution. We have described this law as the law of conflict, harmony and unity.

John, for instance, is bound to be in conflict or harmony with Smith or other individual centres in his historical existence, and as a result of this experience he is bound finally to disappear into a life of unity. As we have repeated so often, the inevitable destiny of each and every individual centre is to begin with a career of conflict and finish with a career of unity. John therefore can be studied both as an individual while he is clashing and co-operating with Smith and others and as an individual which represents the realization of the common purpose which formed the goal of harmony.

We have already noted that John has both a historical and mystical side to his individuality. The historical John appeared in the multiple universe when John, along with Smith and others, was functioning in conflict or harmony with them. The mystical John appeared when the conflict and harmony had ceased and all the historical individuals who took part in the conflict and harmony had disappeared to make room for a fresh individual existence as the sole representation of the realization of that common purpose. The two Johns are quite different, and they do not by any chance exist together; nor could we deal with them in exactly the same way. The mystical John is an inference while the historical John is an object of observation whom we cannot escape. If John, for instance, finds himself in conflict with Hitler, John's individuality in that conflict will consist in an attempt to preserve a mystical unity which must be believed to have been a fact, while Hitler's attempt will be to destroy it. So that both John and Hitler will have to refer to that mystical unity, or in other words the mystical unity which was at the time a past event would have to be referred to by them.

This reference, by the way, could be called concept, and for two clear reasons:

(*a*) It refers to a unity or event which was brought about by the joint activity of so many individuals, and in which so many individuals were equally interested.

(*b*) The act of reference not only appears in John but in all those who might have worked for it or who believed equally that it was a fact worth defending. In other words, many instances of the same experience and reference existed.

The concept therefore, as we have said, is only an evidence about a past event, and not a substitute for it. It is necessary if only because conflict is not possible without such a reference.

If John, for instance, had no experience that sometime

or other in his career there was the kind and type of life which he was trying to preserve, there would be no point in his making an effort to preserve and continue it. The fact that he is making an effort is a proof that he has had that experience, even as it was an evidence that the life in question was no longer there.

It ought to be perfectly clear by now that for this philosophy the term universal can only refer to the mystical feature of John. If we say John is honest, we should be taken to mean that John, who must be at the moment engaged in some conflict or harmony with, let us say, Smith, or the stone wall, did sometime or other in his past life form a mystical unity along with so many others, to which the term "honesty" as a concept or category is supposed to refer. As a matter of fact, all terms which have been accepted as concepts or categories mean exactly the same kind of life or some form of mystical unity or other. They do not refer to anything which John or any individual is supposed to possess or contain as a historical individual. There was nothing to answer to honesty or humanity or even stupidity in John's framework as he stood there in the midst of a conflict or harmony except an experience which referred to some past event in his long career. And it should not be difficult after this to realize why the term "indescribable" also should be associated with the concept or the universal, in so far as it referred to a mystical unity. There is no other context in which the term "indescribable" may conceivably be used. And what is more, it should not be taken to mean what cannot be described, but what does not admit of description. As a matter of fact, the concept or the universal which is an experience of the historical John is just as describable as the percept which represents the present and immediate interest of John. But while the percept is nothing but describable, the concept which is equally describable refers to something which does not admit of description.

At any rate, this is the way in which the philosophic scheme that we have been developing will retain the two notions: universal and indescribable.

There is one more question which we have to discuss under our theory of Knowledge and that is the theory of Time.

One of the points of difference between our view of the universal or concept and that of tradition lay in the fact that while we made the universal or concept refer to some past event, tradition frankly claimed that the concept referred to a feature or character which was directly connected with the particular or percept. The notion of the distinction between past and present was directly emphasized in our view. It is necessary, therefore, that we should state our own position about past, present, and future clearly enough if we want to make our theory of the particular and universal altogether consistent.

Let us go back to John again and ask the question, what is it that we mean when we refer to John's past life? How does the question of reference to the past life of John arise if it be a fact that John, as an individual centre, in the grip of conflict or out of it, is perpetually on the move? What possible function can the past which is supposed to be irretrievably dead exercise on the ever moving identity or personality of John?

We might start our analysis of Time by a reference to the well-known controversy between the empiricist and the rationalist. Such a reference might be of great use precisely because the origin of that controversy is traceable to the outstanding difficulty about Time.

It is well known that the main position of the empiricist centred in the exclusive claim about sense-datum or sensum or sensation as the immediate experience which in their main gospel is variously described. The particular, to put the same empirical claim in another form, is the only conceivable fact.

John, for instance, will be honestly taken by an empiricist as a particular individual who may be involved at any particular moment in some particular conflict or harmony. There would or could be nothing in John's career or experience which the opponents of the empiricists normally described as generality or universality.

As a humorist once put it, the empirical faith resulted in a vow that no honest man or woman should worship except in a temple which is dedicated to the Particular with a capital P.

But could the empiricist seriously believe that the cult of the particular could be professed or kept alive unless it were possible to undermine the claim of Time as past and future? Unless, in other words, the present was conceded the exclusive right to all existence and all past and future were banished out of existence, could the particular be claimed as the only conceivable existent. The empirical position was bound to imply that the past was dead like the Dodo, while the future was fated to remain unborn for ever.

And it is a notorious fact that the empiricists were cautious enough to pitch their tents in the heart of the particular which could not reach out either to a remote past or to a distant future, much less across the intervening spaces to the end of the universe. And if we can use an analogy, we can add that, like the inhabitants of the forest region, they always thought that it was wiser and safer not to go out after dark. The method by trial and error, the only empirical technique, really meant that outside the present moment, that which we can with confidence handle and observe, it was really all forest region after dark.

And it is by no means unwise to ask the simple question, is the region which falls beyond the present truly like the forest region after dark? And if by any chance it is so, should we be foolish enough to venture out in the dark.

One obvious reason why we cannot follow the empiricists is that we find ourselves in the hopeless position where it

is necessary that we must believe in the past and future, even though we cannot give any evidence for our belief. The fact is that once the belief in the past and future had somehow arisen we could not quite get rid of it. Fortunately or unfortunately the human race is in the same predicament with regard to past and future as the man-eater in the Himalayan forest is with regard to his hunt for the blood of man. As he cannot leave off once he has tasted it by sheer chance, we cannot help exploring the region of the past and future precisely because we have long ago fallen a prey to their lure. Whatever the difficulty in establishing the validity of the past and future might be, they could not be denied altogether as facts of experience. A denial of the past and the future, it has been strongly held, would not leave the present unharmed, as there is no present which is not literally banked by the past on the one side and the future on the other.

But it does not follow that because our belief in the past and future is inevitable, it must necessarily be accepted as sound. As a matter of fact, there has been no moment either in speculation or practice where our reason or conscience was satisfied that our belief in time had sufficient ground under its feet. We could never deny that it was difficult to prove that we know the past which is dead and gone or can deal with the future which is unborn and non-existent. In so far as we held that the object of knowledge somehow must be assimilated to knowledge, whether by the knowing-subject becoming the object, or by the object becoming translated into the knowing subject, the difficulty of knowledge about the past and future never disappeared. And it is a fact that no theory of memory or prevision could be held with perfect assurance. If we held such theories, we held them simply because we could not help believing in the past and future. It was not the theory about the past that made the past clear: it was the belief in the past that made the theory necessary.

Besides it would be a mistake to claim that we ever did away with those who followed the lead of the planets or the stars or claimed, and quite justly, other and more intricate methods of reading the past and future. The fact is that whether we believed only in what our small experience or the strictly countable data of the scientist supported, or threw all caution to the four winds of heaven and believed in prophecy, soothsaying, and mystic utterances, it was our inevitable belief in the past or the future that determined our choice. We sought every available means to justify our faith. There was no question of holding it as a matter of logical assurance or rational belief.

It might be interesting, therefore, to ask why we at all believed in the past and the future, in spite of the fact that such a belief was so palpably groundless. Could not one suggest a logical explanation of it? Perhaps one can; but before we proceed to discuss that possibility, let us remind ourselves that the best way to find out a logical explanation of the belief in the past and future is to consult what we have described as the central meaning of the universe where, indeed, the question of time arises. It is not our belief in time that will determine the nature of the universe, but the nature of the universe that will determine the validity of time. What is essential and fundamental is not our experience of time but the objective and fundamental fact of the universe. Time, like so many other things, is a detail which may or may not be a myth. The whole question of its validity is whether it is necessary that we must believe in past and future under the direct injunction of the nature of the universe.

In other words, the issue about time is whether the fact that the universe has a central end to realize implies necessarily that time must be regarded as essential for that realization. If the central end, for instance, has to be realized in as many forms as possible, have we to believe that time must be regarded as one of those necessary forms? Even if our

experience of past and future have no independent or intrinsic value of their own, may it not still be believed that they are valuable on the ground that they are unique forms by which to realize the central end of the universe? There may be nothing in the present which makes it superior in validity or worth to past or future. Present, past, and future, on their own, may offer us nothing by which we could choose between them. Still, we may have to ask whether they are significant from the point of view of the central meaning of the universe.

What then is the central meaning of the universe in so far as it has a direct bearing on the question of time?

The central meaning of the universe, as we have so often pointed out, is nothing but the realization of its main objective. This takes place according to the one universal law which we have described as conflict, construction and unity. The question of the validity of time, therefore, is the question whether this law makes time or its instances—past, present and future—essential for its realization. In other words, we have to discover from an analysis of conflict, harmony and unity whether it is necessary that they must imply present, past and future. The issue simply is whether conflict, as we shall soon have to discuss, implied both the present and the past while harmony implied both the present and the future.

It might be useful however to remind ourselves that the whole issue of time arose in tradition on the basis of the theory of knowledge. If difficulties about time arose, the reason was that knowledge was supposed to imply a direct or indirect contact between the subject that knows and the object that is known. It was impossible with such a view of knowledge to hold that we could know time except when it was wholly or altogether present. The two other features of time, past and future, could not be known as they were non-existent. If contact between the subject that knows and the object that is known is essential before any knowledge can

arise, past and future cannot be known, as contact between non-existent objects is inconceivable. The issue of time, therefore, necessarily appeared, since time is not conceivable without past and future. And it has not been possible for tradition to solve the issue precisely because it did not see its way to altering its theory of knowledge.

With us, both the theory of knowledge and the issue of time equally changed. The issue of time is not whether we can know the past or future as we do not hold that knowledge implies a duality of subject that knows and object that is known. We have discussed the nature of knowledge already. The issue of time is whether we have an experience of time, or present, past and future; and if we have, how present, past and future are connected in our experience. If we can prove that the present has no meaning apart from past and future, the issue of time, it may be expected, will be solved. The fact that the past and future are non-existent, makes no difference to our solution, for we are never called upon to deal with any experience which implies a subject that knows and an object that is known both being distinct and separate.

But can we find a connection between the present on the one hand and the past and future on the other?

The answer is that we can: and it is the central or the main objective of the universe which makes that connection inevitable. And to see exactly how that connection is inevitable, we must go back to the analysis of conflict and harmony once again, which that central end implied. And if we do find as a result of that analysis that conflict and harmony equally imply not only the present but also the past and future, the dispute about the validity of time is bound to cease. If we cannot question the law of conflict, construction and unity, it ought to be equally impossible to question what is necessarily implied by them.

Conflict is nothing if not an opposition between two individual centres which have to function in opposite or incom-

patible ways with regard to one and the same object. One primary condition of conflict is that an object or event must be supposed to have been in existence somehow or other before an occasion for the conflict might arise. And the conflict itself will consist in what we have called attempt or effort to continue or to discontinue the lease of its life. It is not only necessary that there must be an object or event which existed in some form or other, but it should be possible to make an attempt to remove it or to continue it even after it had ceased to exist. This is the fundamental condition of conflict. It follows, therefore, that in dealing with an event or object it will be a mistake to think that we have dealt with it fully or sufficiently by giving only an account of its existence. A complete account of it ought to include the description of the situation where an attempt was made to revive it or to continue it. This account would be an account of the conflict with regard to that object, for the attempt to continue or revive is invariably met by an attempt to discontinue or prevent the revival.

But how does the conception of time arise from the nature of conflict, as we have just stated it? Does it follow that we must accept present, past and future equally if we accept that theory?

It is evident that the effort or attempt to continue or discontinue an event or object will be universally described as something present. Nobody will try to prove that it was neither present nor a fact. In fact, it is exactly such an experience of the human mind that is emphasized by the empiricists as the only form of valid experience, and no empiricist would advocate anything which was not both particular and present. Some even would associate the whole conception of Reality with it. If Reality, according to them, can thrive or exist anywhere it must exist in that moment. Everything else is non-existent and fantastic and utterly incapable of developing identity of any description.

But if our analysis is taken for granted can we deny that

the present moment, which is certainly existent, presupposes something else which was not there, and therefore must be regarded as past? Would there be any point in an attempt to continue or discontinue anything if it were a fact that there was or could be no such thing? On the other hand, if it had to be considered as fact, could we spend all our energies in reviving it or preventing its revival if we did not believe that it had ceased to exist?

It seems to be evident that if we take conflict to mean an effort or attempt to revive, or prevent a revival, we have to believe both in the present and past equally. We have to hold that the moment of reviving or discontinuing, which is present, must imply that the object of revival is not present but literally past and non-existent. There will be every reason to believe that so long as something has not actually become past and non-existent after it was existent, the present which represented an attempt at its revival cannot arise. In other words, the present directly implies or refers to the past; it has absolutely no sense whatsoever apart from the past.

If we now turn to the case of harmony and raise exactly the same issue about the future, we are sure to discover that exactly the same kind of relationship exists between the present and the future. The future is clearly non-existent, just as the past is; but that disagreeable fact will give no ground for doubting that it might not be referred to or implied by the present.

If John and Smith, for instance, are found to be engaged in bringing about a certain result by realizing a common object, what is sure to happen is that their respective activities and efforts which cannot but be present will refer necessarily to that realization which is or can be necessarily prospective. The issue here clearly turns on the common object. If we have to believe that no realization ever takes place except in a relation of harmony in which more than one individual centre has to take part with their unique functions or activities, how could we avoid holding that the

activities which are present have no meaning apart from the common object? The future here is distinctly referred to or implied by the present, exactly as the past was referred to or implied in conflict. The truth therefore is that if future or past were inconceivable there would be no meaning left in the present, precisely because the present is only an activity or effort to bring about a result which refers either to past or to future.

The question that remains to be discussed, therefore, is, what are past and future in themselves? What direct evidences have we, if any, of past and future? We know that the effort or attempt either to preserve or discontinue is the direct evidence of the present. Are there any such evidences of the past and future? Do we find in our experience anything which represents the past or the future as we do about the present?

The evidence about the past and future seems to be constituted by what we call images in our experiences exactly as the percept, by common consent, constitutes the evidence for the present. Both percept and image, as a matter of fact, are equally existent and constitute what is called immediate experience. But it is equally a fact that while the percept refers to our activity, whether in conflict or harmony, the image only refers to some existent fact which was either gone out of existence or not yet existent. It is an obvious truth, though extremely important, that the functions of the percept and image are altogether different. So that there is no reason why we should not argue that while the percept is solely the evidence for the present, the image is almost nothing but an evidence for the past and future. And this truth or fact in its turn ought to constitute sufficient evidence for the past and future themselves.

But we may not quite see the point of this argument if we do not draw a line of distinction between the notions of existence and experience on the one hand and those of percept and image on the other. Both percept and image

are equally existent and constitute what is called immediate experience. There can be no question of distinguishing them on the score of existence or experience.

But they are altogether different if we approach them from the point of view of time. As a matter of fact, there is no reason why we should not call the percept by the name of present and the image by the name of past or future. In fact, we cannot point to any instance of present except to that of the percept, exactly as it was the image that constituted the past and future altogether. Both percept and image, therefore, in one sense can be supposed to constitute not only the evidence of present, past and future, but literally the present, past and future themselves. In so far as the image is different from the percept, there is no reason why we should mix up the present, past and future. On the other hand, as they are both facts, time can or ought to be taken as fact too.

The issue, however, that arises out of this strange alignment of present, past and future refers to the nature of the object which the image refers to either as past or future. If it is not fictitious but a fact, could we not locate the precise way in which it must exist if it is to be taken as fact?

We have said enough about the nature of conflict and harmony to claim that the object or event that is referred to must necessarily be the image. The function of the image, if it is behaving as the common object in harmony, is to refer to the realization that will follow. In conflict, the mystical unity referred to by the image is altogether past, and might or might not be a historical fact. There are two distinct forms of mystical unity and the images in consequence are different. In both cases however the reference is to what is believed to be fact and not fiction, although both the mystical unities may not be historical facts.

And it may not be useless to refer in this connection to the distinction which the scientists have always made

between hypothesis and verified result, if we can talk in terms of analogy. It will not be correct to say that the hypothesis was a historical fact even to the scientist who swears by fact. Let us illustrate.

If we take, for instance, the case of an orchestral concert as a case of harmony, we shall find that the conductor starts with a definite sense of some music which he makes an effort all the time to convey to each and every one of the instrumentalists who play separate tunes. There is a clear distinction between the idea of the music in the head of the conductor and the separate tunes which the instruments have to play. Each of the instrumentalists is expected to play up to that idea. It is the same to all the instrumentalists.

Whether this is a fair or correct account of the musical experience we do not know. We are not musicians ourselves, but our impression from what we have gathered from different musicians is that it may not be altogether incorrect. So far as we are concerned we are prepared to claim that if the symphony is a case of harmony, the conductor has to be taken as a very important person indeed, who, in our jargon, represents the common purpose and the image which does service for it. The instruments are so many functions or activities whose sole aim is to help in bringing about the realization of that common object.

What we cannot help emphasizing is that the different tunes which the different instruments play have no significance from the point of view of the symphony if we take them separately. Nor would it be very useful to argue that nothing else happens to convert them to the status or character of symphony except the fact of relating them or arranging them in a certain order and system. For the system or order and relating and bringing the different tunes together are all distinct notions which have to be accounted for. We may deny them altogether if we like and be happy with the tunes alone, as the empirical philosophers under the leadership of David Hume would in all likelihood

advise all our musicians to do, or we may land ourselves in the equally hopeless position of losing the tunes by emphasizing the value of system and order and relation as the rationalists would suggest. But these are scrupulously drastic procedures and the reason why such drastic procedures may easily be precarious and altogether useless has been already suggested by us. There should, therefore, be no difficulty in accepting the solution that we are suggesting; the acceptance of the common object which appears in the shape of image and which refers directly to a future state where the realization of the common object is supposed to appear. The conductor, therefore, to us is half the performance, and his own performance consists in keeping resolutely the image of the music alive. His success or failure arises in proportion to his adequate or inadequate representation of that image to each and every one of the instrumentalists.

If we now turn to the moment after the performance, especially the moment when that definite piece of music is challenged by its contrary, we shall find the image playing its part again. Instead of the old performance producing the music we shall have an attempt at a performance, and the image that will appear as the background of that attempt will be different from the one which appeared in the performance that produced that music. We shall respectfully submit to the musicians that here is a field for research for distinguishing the two different kinds of performance which refer respectively to the same moment, though prospectively and retrospectively. What we mean is that the image which is implied by the attempt at performance will refer to the musical moment after it ceased to exist, while the image which is implied by the performance will refer to it before it came into existence.

The essential point to note, therefore, is that we should be wise and draw a line of distinction between the performance of music and the musical moment which must

be mystical and a unity. It would be a mistake if we do not keep in mind that the historical moment which is represented by the performance and where the multiple appears is altogether different from the mystical which is represented by music as such and where unity appears.

PART TWO

RELIGION AND ETHICS

CHAPTER I

ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Analysis of religious experience—varieties of religious faiths—the central and competing themes of religious consciousness: (1) revelation of God to man; (2) absorption of man in God—analysis of these two claims and comparison between them—the clue in them to the whole drift of religious history and the origin of our social history—two different social orders arose on the basis of these different religious conceptions: (*a*) the group or the caste order; (*b*) the individual or the class order.

We shall now bring to a close our long metaphysical enquiry and proceed to deal with the practical issue. And the last milestone on our journey will be reached by the time we have analysed the religious mysteries of the human race. If we have chosen religion rather than ethics or logic as the field in which to explore the practical bearing of our metaphysical position, we have done so on the ground that religion is the least intelligible of human experiences—the means of verifying its result is proverbially by no means comparable to what we are usually familiar with on the historical or empirical plane.

Many a thinker closed his enquiry far short of this last milestone, while at least some deliberately chose not to speak of their experience, although they firmly held that they had crossed over to the other side. It would be foolhardy to deny that we do get into a baffling situation as we approach the mysteries of religious experience. The least that any of us can do is to preserve our courage and humility if we want to get down to the bottom of what we call the spiritual or religious feature of our universe.

And yet, if by any chance we do succeed in probing the secret of our life of religion in the same way in which we have analysed the edifice of the universe, it is to be expected

that our success will be an additional evidence of all that we have so far recorded in this treatise. And there can be no reason why it should not be possible to undertake such an enquiry or analysis of religious experience. Religious experience is neither different from any other experience nor is it in any sense identical with divine existence. If there is sufficient ground for an enquiry into human experience, religious experience cannot be an exception.

Even if we are not disinclined to hold that there is a God in the heavens or on earth below, as a good portion of the human race held, there is no reason why we should not make room for religious experience as a unique event. What this experience exactly means and how it should be distinguished from the existence of God is just what we have to find out, but it does not follow that we have no case for the uniqueness of religious experience: we have sufficient ground for analysing the category of religion or spirituality in the same way in which we analysed the category of the universe and Reality.

But before we proceed to analyse this category strictly, it might be useful to take stock, if only in a general way, of the traditional output on the religious issue. Let us very roughly summarize it.

If we could by any chance dig out the root of religious experience, it seems certain that we should find that the mainspring of all human effort lay there. No other experience on record in human history gave rise to so much eloquent spontaneity or honest expression. There was no known mood or sentiment or habit of the human mind which did not, directly or indirectly, find its echo in it, or seek to give it a shape or form of its own. It would be difficult to dissociate the religious experience or activity of the human race from its economic, artistic, or contemplative phases.

It is an open question still whether God, the subject-matter of all religious experience, is but the purest blue of the firmament, or the stern, ever-wakeful judge of all things

that grow or happen in the wide universe, or, after all, nothing more expressive than the inmost faith and trust of the human heart. Equally true is it that human history is full of records which testify to the strange fact that while the human mind frankly believed that God was only in the heavens or behind the mysterious clouds, it also held firmly that even such harmless and innocent things as stocks or stones might equally suitably form a habitat for Him. The belief ran furiously that nowhere on the wide horizon which human eye can scan, or in the inmost recess of mind which human intellect can probe, could one possibly find God. And yet, it was equally firmly held that God either walks on the earth in a strange trance, or passes through its fitful shades at periodic intervals, and once, suddenly, chose to be born like a human child for the benefit of the human race. There has been no end to the varied beliefs or faiths about God in human history, nor did they always appear as mere varieties of faiths or beliefs, they positively clashed at times as what the logicians call direct opposites or incompatibles.

And yet never, perhaps, did any two instances of the multitudinous expressions of religious zeal clash, one with another, as the two historic views or institutions known as "revelation of God to man" and "the absorption of man in God." Between them, without a shadow of doubt, they formed the central and competing themes of all religious consciousness. They have not only been worked in devious ways into the main texture of human life, but formed the chief ground on which races and cultures have steadily and furiously split.

It has been claimed with great faith and vigour that God, the eternal and infinite Reality, did actually reveal Himself to man as he lived, bound hand and foot in time and space. It has been held equally firmly that man, who was subject to the laws of the universe, did actually become one with God, who was the one unlimited and eternal Reality. Men and women have argued with conviction that it was both

more possible and natural that God should become man, as He was omnipotent, than that man should become God, as there was no freedom or latitude open to man. Equally strongly has it been argued that the very meaning of human existence implied that it must complete or fulfil itself in Divinity as its only realization or goal. No other sense or value can be conceivably attached to what we call limitation or finiteness of man. Besides, there is no need on the part of God the omnipotent to become anything else—God is eternally self-sufficient and perfect; on the other hand, there is all the need for the limited human being to become God, as he has nothing else to do.

And precisely because these two distinct forms of faith and belief steadily arose as to the possibilities of God and man, two strictly competing views were taken as to what actually happened in the historic setting. On the one hand attempts were made to prove that nothing short of revelation took place, in a mysterious form which only an authoritative interpretation could rightfully grasp. It was claimed with unparalleled vehemence that it not only took place in a particular place and a particular time but took shape in a particular race. On the other hand, it was tenaciously claimed that all that happened was the absorption of man in God, as the only suitable result of a life of spotless purity, love and austerity. There was nothing to prevent the transcendence of time, space, and all the lineaments of limited existence, provided that the disciplined and beneficent life was led, unmindful of the sacrifices. The fact either of revelation or absorption was the sole medium through which the historic events of religious achievement were universally treated.

And yet although limitation was not considered to be a bar to the reception of the unlimited, a distinction was made between one form or kind of limitation and another. So that the rest of creation which did not receive the revelation was either ruled out of any claim to recognition, or

piously subordinated to the one which was chosen by the Divine Will. No such subordination of any section or part of the limited universe took place in the scheme of the Absorptionist; what took place instead was a distinction that was made on the basis of the fulfilment and non-fulfilment of the conditions that were rigidly set. While every part and portion of the limited world was supposed to be capable of reaching the unlimited, the actual fulfilment of this universal claim took place only in the case of those who satisfied the conditions. So that the limited universe had always a number of those as a remainder who seemed to be perpetually on probation or had to repeat the experiment time after time which alone could qualify them for the final goal.

Those who believed in revelation, again, openly stood not only for the authoritarian interpretation which ruled out the claim on the part of the human individual to form his own judgement or decision by the exercise of reason, but also for the absolute control of human destiny by some extraordinary human individual. It was left altogether to the human individual who was supposed to have received the revelation to dictate to his race. Whatever happened to be said or intended by him was law, and that, not necessarily for the clear sense that it bore; and none but those who somehow held in trust his authority could interpret it if such a need ever arose.

On the other hand, those who believed in absorption stood for the universal laws alone that govern all things that exist or grow in the universe. What could truly and necessarily help in bringing about that absorption was a question, not of the dictation or decree of any individual person with authority, but literally of the universal laws to which this universe was subject.

Judgement about practice or procedure differed enormously between the two points of view. While in one case the text of the scriptures was appealed to, so that the

function of interpretation was a function of discovering whether a practice or procedure was consistent or not with the text, in the other case, it was altogether a matter of discovering its absolute and necessary reasonableness or significance. What was appealed to, in the last analysis, was the word of the individual in the one case, and nothing but the hitherto accumulated wisdom of the human race in the other.

Or we may put the difference between the two points of view by saying that while the advocates of revelation honestly believed that God should be or is manifest, as any object great or small in time or space is manifest for the benefit or welfare of man, the advocates of absorption held that the unmanifest is just as real as the manifest, and God should never be sought in time or space as a manifested reality whatever the need of man. Perhaps the humorist might interpret the distinction by saying that the Revelationist was only the scientist in disguise, who wanted truly to handle God, as if it were possible to bring Him under the rays of scientific test. While according to the same humorist the Absorptionist might have made only a virtue of a poetic need and wanted nothing so much as to sing and dance in the name of God.

And yet these two sharply contrasted views, if we analyse them at length, may yield us a direct clue to the whole drift of our religious history. We may easily gather from them the secret of all religious warfare as well as the true source and origin of toleration and compromise. It may be as perfectly easy for us to see, in the light of these views, why the Revelationist so conscientiously carried on religious warfare as to discover why his rival, the Absorptionist, had to choose its direct opposite, the method of persuasion.

And what is truly remarkable, we cannot review the two schools of faith without coming to the inevitable conclusion that the differences between them did not appear on religious grounds or technique alone. They differed instead, alto-

gether, in their whole outlook on social living, since they approached all problems of life and thought from opposite angles. Whether about the ideal goal of social living, or about the technique of dealing with its problems, or even about the source from which those problems arose, there was no possible agreement between them.

And perhaps the main source of their antagonism on the social plane lay in the valuation they made of the agreements and differences which inevitably occur in the complicated texture of human relationships. The differences, it was, rather than the agreements that were considered essential or fundamental by the Revelationists, while the Absorptionists made exactly the opposite choice and valued the agreements. And so necessarily their technique of dealing with problems and difficulties differed. While the Revelationist chose warfare and diplomacy as his peculiar mode of dealing with differences, the Absorptionist chose the opposite mode —compromise, toleration and sacrifice. Similarly, the end and goal of life which they respectively cherished took the form either of realizing a particular gospel, vouchsafed to a particular race, or realizing Divinity itself and nothing short of it.

The disagreements between them were literally as wide as the poles. In fact, it is these historic disagreements which alone will account for the fact that different instances of human society have till to-day kept to the path of crude or finished warfare, balanced in vain by equally crude or finished tactics of toleration and compromise.

And yet again, their acute disagreements on the social plane would be wholly and totally unintelligible unless we kept in mind that they, directly or indirectly, arose from the two sharply contrasted conceptions of religious truth. We need not exaggerate the truth to make the suggestion that at the very inception of their social schemes, it was the alternative conceptions of the relation between God and man that most vitally worked. If the human mind chose

from the crude beginning to work out different patterns of social living, the chief and main reason for that decision was that it was faced by two alternative conceptions of God in relation to man. It is difficult not to hold two distinct views if we seriously propose to trace the origin of human society: (*a*) that religious experience must have played a considerable part in its formation; (*b*) that as human mind came to hold alternative religious conceptions, it had to make them the prime-mover of their social schemes.

There is, at least, abundant evidence to show that religion, in some form or other, was perhaps the earliest experience of man in his serious attempt to safeguard the human home and the civilization that it sooner or later came to embody. If conflict was part of the primeval condition of human existence, safeguards against obstacles and protection against danger must have been the earliest goal of human discovery. And as that source was obviously beyond the range of anything human, the sense of the supernatural and the transcendent must have lain incipient in even the crudest of human attempts.

It would be difficult to dissociate the very dawn of social consciousness from the direct implication of what constitutes the central elements of religious consciousness: (*a*) the sense of the highest and most efficient; (*b*) the sense of the supernatural and transcendent.

If therefore the human race came to build up competing forms of social schemes, the secret of that variance is to be found in the alternative conceptions of religious truth. There can be no doubt that the formation of all social schemes at bottom was directly influenced by either the Revelationist or the Absorptionist view of God and man.

If they came to build their social schemes by making exclusive use of either agreements or differences, the reason at bottom was that they believed either in revelation or absorption. The peculiar valuations of agreements and differences as the corner-stone of their social edifice cannot

be accounted for in any other way. And it may be worth while to analyse the two standpoints which lay emphasis on agreements and differences, so that we may more fully realize their historic alignment with the two outstanding religious views.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF WARFARE

Analysis of warfare—the real cause of warfare—to be traced to the central religious conceptions—political and economic warfare equally intelligible in the light of these conceptions—conflict inevitable so long as these conceptions are held—different methods of dealing with conflict—difference between elimination by open or disguised warfare and suppression by persuasion—main points of difference between the two social orders or types—the methods—analysis of the method of conversion—distinction between the spiritual and secular—their different interpretations in the two schemes—the two schemes are incompatible with each other.

PERHAPS it will not be quite untrue to hold that warfare, in spite of its ubiquitous presence in human history, is just a paradox or an enigma which the human mind never could solve. Two things, at any rate, as he looked over its vast and expansive devastation, struck the historian or the philosopher:

(*a*) That warfare did arise as a result of human choice and could have been avoided.
(*b*) That warfare, if it was chosen, was chosen as the only method of solving life's problems in spite of repeated disillusionments about the solution.

It will be difficult for the historian not to conclude that we could have avoided the whole of this inhuman process if mankind had not taken a desperate view of differences and disagreements in human relationships. The origin of warfare can be wholly traced to that fateful decision of man, that differences or disagreements could be dealt with only by warfare. And this decision was made and taken in the teeth of two glaring facts:

(*a*) The claim which was made by those who did not believe in warfare that differences and disagreements

are inessential, and should not be made the pretext of the most outrageous phenomenon in human history.

(*b*) It was open to those who chose warfare to avoid it on the ground that it led to no result that was hoped for and desired.

It is a commonplace of history that except under the influence of partisan spirit, no historian ever failed to note that we do not achieve our end by warfare or fulfil the mission for which we stage wars. And it was hopeless even to make an effort to defend it either by a cynical pose or on the basis of incidental circumstances. To suggest that it is ruthless in decimating the superfluous population, as the storm lays low the overripe fruit, is not to defend it but to satisfy the bloated economist or the scheming politician. Even the uncynical valuation that it literally provides for genuine heroism and a practice of strict endurance in the midst of paralysing conditions will not justify it. The fact that the vast majority take it as an inevitable drain on human energy, and somehow a supreme call for sacrifice, without any direct sense of the dark motives that stage it, is only an evidence of its grimness. Its redeeming features are not proved by repeated insistence that its latest method was like the tropical thunderstorm which the gods themselves send us to purify the air, or that it leads to a moral quickening sooner or later, making its victims more prone to listen to the call from the spiritual height than ever. Even the harvest that the humanitarian reaps in the aftermath of warfare by the spirit of brotherhood among the races of mankind does not argue in favour of it. For the dark intent which attaches to it like a stigma is the ruination of the human species, its complete extinction. Nothing less than this real evil is foreshadowed by it, and no other institution in human history has that diabolic outlook or sinister possibility.

The human race, as its long history has steadily shown, was by no means reluctant to undergo privation, misery and

mutilation. Its resolute will to undergo discipline and submit to sacrifices must have been unlimited; even death, to it, was not an unmitigated evil. Its faith in immortality was rooted deep to withstand the menace of death, even if it was staged on the scale of an epidemic or a field of battle.

But it was impossible for the human race to contemplate extinction calmly; it could not with equanimity or sanity submit to a discipline which meant complete frustration of all that it valued. A line is definitely and firmly drawn by it between suffering which threatens nothing less than extinction and that which does not destroy but necessarily rejuvenates.

That is the chief reason why warfare, although practically or incidentally redeemed, was never welcomed as a blessing. At any rate, as it never led to the fulfilment of mission or stability of order, or security of peace, it stood condemned by men and women of all tradition.

Besides, it has been carefully noted by thinkers of all ages that the most one could achieve by warfare was victory, which meant a defeat of our rival but not necessarily a fulfilment of the mission for which the warfare was staged. To win a war is to beat the enemy but not necessarily to achieve the purpose for which we went to war. There is a difference, again, between the elated, waxing moment of victory and the depressed and paralysed condition of defeat. It is impossible not to notice this distinction. But elation is not a sign of achievement, nor is it anything but a false hope which invariably leads either to disillusionment or defeat. History records impartially the invariable return of the enemy to neutralize the victory. What happens in warfare happens in all conflict in the shape of mutual destruction of all that either side stood for. There can never be a chance in it for the fulfilment of mission or stability of order or security of peace.

How, then, was it that the human race chose warfare as the most efficient way of dealing with differences? Why did it believe, time after time, that at least the next stage or

step in the method of warfare was bound to bring success, even if centuries on end did not produce that agreeable result?

If the illusion about success, like an inescapable evil, arose in spite of repeated disillusionment, it cannot be dismissed as an accident. We have to account for it. And it seems to us perfectly possible that the secret of it lay not so much in the valuation of the technique of warfare as in the exceptional valuation of the interests which that technique was intended to serve.

It would be stupid to suggest that any of the fighting peoples of history were not aware of the dark nemesis which never for a moment left the course of warfare. Nor would it be correct or fair to hold that the fighters, for some inscrutable reason, failed to appreciate the value either of human life or works of art, or even of hard-won wealth which is essential to the maintenance of life. If we prefer inadvertently to credit them with stupidity or barbarism it will be extremely difficult to preserve the human claim to intelligence or refinement of manners. For it is only a question of sheer time or accident whether this section or that section of the human community happens to assume the role of fighter. No section can avoid playing that role sooner or later. It would be a stupid mistake to account for the illusion by sudden pathologic or abnormal misfortunes in the career of those who fought. We have to find some other explanation if we can.

To us, the persistently repeated claim that whatever interest may come into clash with the main object of the fight, that competing interest has to be ruthlessly put out of the way, is a sufficient explanation for that illusion. The belief that what is of absolute and perfect value must prevail, even though the heavens fall, will alone fully account for the repeated attempts to utilize the technique of fighting, in spite of the age-long repeated failures of that technique.

And the only legitimate enquiry that can arise after this

is, why should such a strange valuation of interest have to be made? What is or can be the ground or secret of that strange valuation? The answer is simple enough.

If the interest in question is considered to be absolute in its claim and value, the reason is that it is literally identified with what has been accepted already as the revelation of God. All such valuations if closely sifted are sure to imply at bottom some chosen nucleus or other which is reputed to have received the revelation of God. Any student of history, whatever his predilection, may easily confirm this truth. Besides, there are at least some historic instances where such claims to absoluteness were made on the tacit and definite plea that the interest in question was nothing if not an embodiment of Divinity itself. It is impossible to forget them.

Besides, if we persuade ourselves to believe that God does reveal Himself to persons on earth, where we human mortals live, move and have our being, could we cherish any end or goal unless it were replete with that divine revelation? When such an unusual chance of getting hold of the absolute truth lay ready to hand, when, in spite of our infirmity and feebleness, we human beings had the rare opportunity to come into touch with the absolute good and truth, is it possible that we should pursue any other course to discover our end or goal? Could we in any case hope to make the prospects of our chequered and precarious existence safe and opulent by any other conceivable method than that of seeking light in that supreme revelation?

Whatever the strangeness of this theory, it seems to us to be the only explanation possible provided we start with the theory of revelation. If we find it easy and necessary to hold that the unlimited and all-perfect God can exist in the form of a limited and imperfect thing or being, if the essentially mystical and mysterious reality can be supposed to become historical and definite, it should be inconceivable even for the demented mind to seek light elsewhere.

It is a different question, however, whether this theory can be illustrated easily from the way or manner in which absoluteness has been claimed in different instances of human experiment.

Obviously, the theory may appear to be flatly contradicted by cases in which revelation is denied, though absoluteness is claimed with vigour and tenacity. It might be suggested that the claim to absoluteness in all such cases is based upon reasonableness, that if a particular person's authority or word is accepted as law, and a particular scheme of policy or procedure or constitution is enshrined as sacrosanct, which under no circumstances should be either violated or disobeyed, the explanation is to be found in the evidence and reason which lie behind them.

For instance, if a particular political theory such as Communism professes, or a political constitution which the American people upholds, or the presupposition of such a political method as Democracy claims, are taken into consideration, it might be easily held that they all are cases of absolute good and truth though God or revelation may have nothing to do with them.

Perhaps the position is not always clearly or distinctly put. If the claims under consideration are supposed to be absolute there can be no question of altering them, exactly as the *ex cathedra* judgement of the Pope cannot be questioned or altered. On the other hand, if they can be altered or are liable to be changed or modified there is no reason why they should not be supposed to be the product of thought and experience.

But would the democrat or the communist admit that the cardinal principle on which their political policies or constitutions stand is liable to be modified? Can it be suggested that any democrat or communist could safely admit that the category of "the people" or "the community" is, any more than the category of "German race," or

"European civilization," or "the Christian Church," or the position of the "prophet," open to question?

And if they could not, what is the evidence of that absolute claim that they are not open to question? Whence was it derived if it had to be taken as a fact? Did it not necessarily imply the same kind of source as revelation did, as a matter of honest faith or conviction?

It may be suggested, again, that the philosopher, too, claims absoluteness for his category, and yet, at the same time, no philosopher will be so dead to his profession as to confuse reason with authority or revelation. Why should not the same privilege be conceded to political theorists, who are not less honest or responsible than the philosophers?

There is no reason why absoluteness cannot be claimed as a result of thought and reason. But the absolute claim of the philosopher refers to absolute certainty, and what is more to the point, the subject-matter of that certainty is not a historical or empirical reality but what the philosopher describes as universal or logical reality. In no philosophic system will that which is called the particular or individual be found to be subject-matter for investigation or an article of conviction, unless it is dissipated into empiricism.

And exactly opposite is the claim which is found to be made about the subject-matter of faith, whenever the political theorists talk. "The people" or "German race" or "community" or "constitution" are all concrete and definitely historical instances with which anybody can deal, and what is meant is that in each of them there is a feature which is inviolable.

We have to keep in mind always that the Christians, for instance, do not talk of something which has no historical reality when they talk of revelation and absolute truth in connection with the Christian Church. Nor do the Germans talk about a thing in the air or some imaginary object when they talk about the German race. Anybody can see what a Christian Church is, or a German people. They

are honestly dealing with something which is definite, concrete, and historically real, and not at all something universal or categorical by nature.

And when they talk of absoluteness in connection with these historical realities, which by assumption are supposed to be limited and subject to law, they mean that those very institutions do possess an additional feature which gives them the character of absoluteness and value.

The issue, therefore, arises, what is it that makes the existence of such a feature in a historical reality possible?

Our whole point in the theory we have suggested is that all these instances of absolute claim directly or indirectly, are bound to imply revelation, to account for the origin of that mystical element in those historical institutions. They have to hold that the source of absoluteness, call it by whatever name you like, somehow reveals itself to these institutions. There is no other way by which this claim to absoluteness can be explained or justified (unless we defy the laws of thought and make the historical appear with double face, which we should studiously avoid).

It may sound strange and ridiculous, but even the Communist of the twentieth century may be taken as just as good or bad a revelationist as the Nazi or the Roman Catholic, not to mention the Democrat, or pseudo-Liberal or Rationalist, who took pains for over a century to disown his lineage to the Divine.

To use the language of logic, they all clearly profess a major premise, the source of which they do not seem to be over-anxious to confess, and that major premise stands for the indisputable background of the historical institution with which they firmly deal. If they are found to reason hard too, all this reasoning comes after the grand confession and not before. The function of Reason is to consolidate and re-establish the major premise and not to put its contrary or alternative in its place. Perhaps we might cite the instance of the Protestant creed in the Christian Church to

show how a protest, however virulent, was not meant to supersede the Bible. The Bible, in the last analysis, as a major premise, has to stand to give a support to the whole protest.

Still, it is no part of our constructive scheme to vouchsafe for the absolute truth of the historical review of the Revelationist that we have so far made; it may not be historically comprehensive enough.

But if we assume for the sake of argument that the theory is more or less correct, does it not follow that all races and peoples who believed in the doctrine of revelation had to attach extreme importance to the differences that arose between their interests and views and those of every other race or people? Was it humanly possible that they should not look upon views and interests which differed from their own and were antagonistic to them as necessarily mistaken and false?

It is difficult not to note two points with regard to the faiths or views of the Revelationist: (*a*) they held them as absolute and perfect; (*b*) they literally believed that they embodied Divinity.

With them, it was not a question of merely preserving social or earthly value but of literally safeguarding the Divine Presence. To unsophisticated minds, it should have seemed perfectly plain and seemly that if God came to and made His home with His human creatures, it was up to them to protect Him and defend His values.

This simple analysis of the historical position, whatever its strangeness, makes it perfectly clear why religious wars were fought, how they were fought periodically and for nearly half a century on end at times, and finally how practically continent after continent had to submit to their ravages. They had to be fought; there was literally no help for them, assuming that it was a necessity to uphold the theory that God revealed Himself to human mind.

And even if, by a strange destiny, it so happened that

the wars did not end in the preservation either of God's home on earth or the values which were supposed to be absolute and perfect, such an enigmatic situation had its explanation too. The explanation was that as human agency was most unfortunately deficient and limited, it could but fail to achieve its purpose completely, in spite of its rigidly solemn claim. What truly failed was not the truth or the value of revealed existence, but merely the limited human effort that sought to preserve it or to propagate it with care. It would be blasphemy to think that the failure was a proof that the Divine was not there or the truth was not absolute. It was but a sign that the attempt to protect the values must be repeated over and over again. It did not and could not mean that the actual presence of the Divinity should be doubted, or that we should not put much more vigour than ever into our effort to establish it for the benefit of the human race. There could never be any doubt or question about the revealed presence or the absolute value. What could be questioned or doubted was the capacity and efficiency of the Church which was devoted to the sacred work of propagating that revealed existence. As contrasted with the revealed truth the Church was but a puny human effort for the propagation of truth. Instead of being complete or permanent as an institution, the Church required renewal and modification, as it was bound to fail to achieve its purpose completely. The Revelationist was by no means mistaken if his main assumption was sound.

And not only the enigma of the religious wars but also the equally disputed conception of personal God which formed a very important part of the creed of the Revelationist would be intelligible if we kept their theory of revelation in mind.

Personality must be taken as a necessary attribute of God, if it be a fact that God reveals Himself in a particular historic setting and that in the form of a human being. There would be no point in claiming that God became

human if we chose to deny at the same time that God is a person. Whatever difficulties there might be about the conception of personality, there can be no question that a human being has to be called a person. So that if God has not only to take a concrete character in a definite, historic setting, but to take it in the form of a human being, we have to describe God as a person. At least, religious wars and the doctrine of personality result as necessary consequences of the theory of revelation, and these are two of its outstanding consequences which have naturally taken up so large a part of human history.

If we now turn to the opposite school, it will be noted that the position which the Absorptionist held with regard to both the issues—Differences and Personality, was the direct opposite of what the Revelationist held about them. They did not believe that differences were essential, nor was it their conviction that God was a person. And if we want to see how they came to differ so fundamentally, it might be worth while to analyse the conception of society which lay behind the two points of view. As the two issues, Differences and Personal God, arise in the course of our social living, an idea of the contrasted views of society may, in any case, be of great value. We shall begin with the sociological conception of the Absorptionist.

Broadly speaking, society to the Absorptionist is just an organization of human units with emphasis on two of its principal features: (*a*) that it is a unity rather than a mere aggregate; (*b*) that the agreements among its constituents, the human units, matter so much more than the differences. And this central idea of unity was based directly on the firm belief that Divinity as an existent fact was completely out of the social picture. To the Absorptionist there was but one category with which to measure the quality or claim of the constituents of society and that category was strictly human. Whatever the differences between the human units, they were all scrupulously human and cannot be dis-

tinguished as divine in one portion and merely human in the rest.

And further, as Divinity was but a common goal and not the trait or character of any human unit, relationship among the constituents had to be one of degree, or graded equality. If we judge it in terms of truth or value, it should be understood in terms of grades of truth and value and not as truth and falsehood. There was or could be no falsehood anywhere, nor anything irrational or abnormal which was the contrary of truth.

Differences in such a scheme as contrasted with agreements necessarily became inessential. As the unity of the organization was emphasized and the agreements deliberately taken as its sole standard or concern, the differences automatically came to be looked upon as either an enigma or a misfortune like an epidemic or natural visitation. Their appearance, however unfortunate, did not imply that the social order had broken up to a large or small extent; they were only an evidence or sign of the necessity of a collective activity which alone could deal with a misfortune. Warfare, in any case, was quite out of the question—there was no occasion for warfare as the differences which alone could serve as the *causa belli* had no real significance to such a scheme. And it is a historic fact that such organizations which professed or practised the Absorptionists' principle genuinely never had to fight a religious war.

And the collective activity which took the place of warfare, to deal with large-scale differences, appeared in the shape of persuasion, education and goodwill. If the assumption was that differences implied a clash between levels and degrees, there was sufficient common ground between the conflicting sections or groups on which the method of persuasion could work. At bottom it was nothing but a question of helping the weaker side to see that the other, with which it clashed, was only the more complete or perfect view of truth.

And this implied, further, that the less complete and gifted side should have to be not only intellectually helped to realize the completer truth, but also morally supported by a profession of goodwill and practice of restraint. The procedure or discipline which the method of persuasion implies is no less intellectual than it is moral. The gifted and prominent men in the Absorptionist school were not only highly intellectual men but eminent for their patience, perseverance and sacrifice. The more complete truth had to be in abeyance even though it was more complete; it had to wait for its realization till the less complete truth was completely cleared out of its way. And it was this waiting which was the source of all the moral virtues which sacrifice and perseverance embodied. It seemed at times as if there was no limit to that waiting. The greatest historical figure in the Absorptionist school devotedly passed his long, graciously dedicated life in preaching what he considered to be the completer truth, and he preached it for over half a century literally in the garb of a mendicant, with alms as his daily food and a compassion that would not hurt even a blade of grass. And as for his outpouring goodwill and unstinting benevolence to mankind and the animal world, it is difficult to believe that the world could ever produce a more ideal type.

It is almost impossible to choose between the intellectual and moral feature of the method of persuasion. What contributed most to the uplift of the less gifted, whether it was the compassion and love or the profound analysis of the completer truth which the method of persuasion involved, is still an open issue. It is the most difficult method ever devised by the human mind, even as its key-note of unity, whether on the human plane or on the plane of the whole universe, is the hardest one to visualize.

And we might begin our analysis of the social scheme of the Revelationist by showing that, in it, this notion of unity had no significance. The notion was directly challenged in

so far as human society was supposed to stand divided into two hostile groups: (*a*) the group that received the revealed truth, (*b*) the group that was in defiance of it.

Society could not be regarded as a unity precisely because it had no common ideal or purpose. The only evidence there was of its being a society or organization was that it represented the cohesion or relationship which, for instance, makes a universe of discord or a field of battle possible. There can be no question that the two hostile camps were in relationship instead of being absolutely different, and that ought to be sufficient ground for calling them by the name of human society. But there was nothing closely intimate or common between them in the light of which alone they could be called a unity.

And this claim was made on the ground that two incompatible agents or factors worked behind the two hostile communities: (*a*) divine, (*b*) non-divine. While one of the communities implied direct attempt on the part of Divinity to realize truth and value on the historical plane, the other was a protagonist of the false one, or the evil incarnate. Society is nothing but a clash between the divine and the non-divine, the true and the false, value and evil. In their extreme moods, the advocates of the Revelationist school declared that while the one was saturated with Divinity, the other was nothing but the Satanic growth. We hear about "damnation" in this context.

Differences, therefore, easily took the central place in the scheme of the Revelationist, and religious warfare in the time of crises and religious conversions in less difficult times followed as a matter of sheer consequence. The inspired type never could slacken in its effort to eliminate the non-divine or false so long as the divine truth and the absolute value had not fully prevailed.

And it might be noted that there was not much to choose between the two methods of the Revelationist school, warfare and conversion. If the method of religious warfare has

to be distinguished from the method of persuasion, there is no reason why conversion as a method should be mixed up with it. Obviously conversion cannot follow the line of rational procedure any more than warfare can, precisely because both honestly stood on revealed truth. It is the nature of revealed truth to cut at the root of all common ground between it and the truth that is not revealed. Between the revealed truth and the truth that is not revealed the relation is one of direct opposition or contrariety. It is not possible that the truth that is not revealed can be treated by the rational or persuasive method, since persuasion must necessarily imply community of purpose or faith.

This is not the place to discuss the religious history of the peoples who believed in revealed truth; it is for the historian to deal with it. But if the spirit and technique of conversion which we have suggested, is not disputed as false, there is nothing to choose between the crusades or mass conversions and cases where a whole people is despoiled of their traditional faith by less obvious or more subtle ways. The distinction between them is the same as between open and organized force and the cautious and subdued technique of economic or cultural devices. Fundamentally they belong to the same category or school of thought. And the historian will readily testify to the fact that colonization, conquest, and migration, if they were stimulated not merely by political motives but by the urge of revealed faith, would amply corroborate this painful story. It is inconceivable that missionary movements in the interest of revealed truth could ever honestly profess or practise the rational method, precisely because there is no common ground between revealed truth and the faith or truth that was supposed to be not revealed. The heathen had to be taken as literally the symbol of falsehood and evil. He was an obstacle, if anything, in the path of the revealed truth. The issue for the missionary was to remove this obstacle and make the

path of the revealed truth easy and clear, so that the whole universe might shine in its radiating brilliance. The meaning of the Gospel is that it must break through the darkness which falsehood has scattered around. The heathen must literally die and be born again in the light of the revealed truth. If not his pagan inheritance, at least the spirit of the heathen must die—a religious necessity which the missionary must conscientiously fulfil. In such an undertaking there could be no room for rational procedure. It is neither possible nor desirable that we should try to negotiate with the Evil One; our plain duty is to kill and destroy what we consider as evil outright.

This is a very important truth to remember if we want to get at the heart of the missionary movements of history. They were all genuine cases of open or mild warfare and should on no account be mixed up with any instance of rational procedure.

And it followed as day follows night in the tropics that the missionary, whatever his devices, was a great failure. Like his prototype the soldier who never succeeded in stabilizing his victory, the missionary failed to establish the revealed truth in the place of the one which was, to him, clearly not revealed.

The faith or truth which was honestly supposed to be not revealed, or false, was only scotched, and not killed by him. It seemed as if the heathen was forced to his knees or won over by devices, never to hark back to it. But there was life in the old faith still, enough of it to simulate death in the garb of the one who wished its demise.

What happened in most cases of conversion was that the converts invariably left behind them a thriving posterity, which had the courage to go back to the ancient faiths. Steadily, almost stealthily, the old gods reappeared and their modern rivals retreated, leaving their clothes behind them. The old garments of the ancient gods were put away, much too decrepit and tattered for use, and the

new garb which was borrowed from the leavings of the modern gods served as a perfect disguise. They lived on in borrowed clothes and simulated pride. There was no faith in their soul nor power in the mind. They had lost the fervour of religious truth and stood as mere gods, no better or worse than the men whose worship they claimed.

The fact was that there was a clash of gods, and in the end neither had strength enough left to overcome the other. They had not even the courage of despair. That is the truth, and that is the only comment that the historian will make on the deliberate attempt to revive the pagan gods in the modern age, and the equally sustained desire to keep alive the gods who were put in their place.

And so far as we are concerned, we are convinced that both the pagan gods and the gods who replaced them for a moment were gods who belonged to this earth, and had no more divine authority or claim than a god of earth or race can legitimately claim. The plea or claim that was based on their behalf on the ground of revelation was mistaken. Between the god of this earth and the God in the Heavens, there was no such contact as to make revelation possible. The missionary of the post-pagan age was fundamentally mistaken in his claim to absolutism or authority on behalf of his god, as his god was no more or less historical than the pagan god. He has no reason to be surprised if his claim did not materialize. He should be thankful instead that his blunder has been checked in time.

And precisely because the Revelationist differed so widely from the Absorptionist as to the nature of human community, they differed diametrically as to the relation between its spiritual and secular features. In the scheme of the Revelationist both the features appear inextricably bound together. Between the State and the Church, for instance, it is difficult to distinguish, unless we deal with the question of mundane and profane administration. There is or can be no activity of any kind in the Revelationist's scheme which is not

associated with the fact or event of revelation. It is the revelation and nothing else which forms, directly or indirectly, the subject-matter for political or economic realization. There is nothing of any importance in the social scheme which does not spring from the revelation itself. As if, in it, Divinity itself passes through social evolution in all its varied, multifarious forms! If it is possible to believe that the Divinity literally became human, it follows that Divinity should have to live out all the stages and phases of human existence. Such a historically situated Divinity is bound, in a sense, to be the mainspring or chief goal of the whole social scheme of the Revelationist.

It would be as correct to say that the community was leading an economic or political life as that it was leading a religious life. There can be nothing peculiarly or uniquely spiritual or religious which could be distinguished from the secular in that community. Strictly speaking, one ought to describe the whole of that community's life as either the direct evolution of that revealed Divinity or an attempt to reproduce an image of it by the human mind. The conception of religion here implies that it is a historically situated Divinity that forms the mainspring and goal of everything that happens in a community. It excludes the possibility of there being any activity which can be supposed to realize something that is not, directly or indirectly, Divinity in its historical form.

And even in cases where Revelation was supposed to have taken place in the shape of prophecy, where Divinity, instead of being called upon to take part directly in the evolution of historic existence, appeared in the shape of reproduction, the issue did not considerably change. For the Prophet, who is supposed either to undergo that process on behalf of Divinity or to inspire or determine it as an agent of the Divinity, has to be credited with the same absoluteness or inevitability of value as was associated with Divinity itself. And even if we have to draw a distinction

between the two evolutions, we cannot forget that differences between the Prophet's will and the rest of the wills in the human community were dealt with in exactly the same way as differences between the will of Divinity itself and these other wills were dealt with. The belief runs that in doing homage to the Prophet and carrying out his will, we do homage to the Divinity itself and carry out nothing short of the Divine Will. And it makes no difference whether the substitute for Divinity is known or called by the name of the Son of God or the Prophet of God. For all practical purposes there is no distinction between Divine Evolution and its substitute, whatever that might mean.

Whether this interpretation will tally exactly with the history of the worship of God in the Son and the Prophet of Divinity is more than we can say, but the point that we are trying to make here is that the distinction between the spiritual and secular will be very difficult to maintain in either view. The whole of life in the revelational communities has to be taken as nothing but either a direct or indirect evolution of Divinity—it should be literally called Divine Evolution. History, in such schemes, is a literal record of the birth and growth of Divinity.

It is a different question, however, whether reproduction of Divine Evolution has any sense or significance. There are many difficulties for which such theories and their corresponding practices have to account. But we do not see how, in any case, it could be maintained that the Revelationist was carrying out any mission which was not strictly religious and spiritual in its essence. Perhaps one might add that if the charge of Pantheism could be levelled at any school of religious thought, it should be levelled at the Revelationist. For in claiming that God literally became human, he conceded in essence the claim of the Pantheist, according to whom there was nothing on this mundane earth which could not be called Divine.

A very different view of the relation between the spiritual

and secular is held by the Absorptionist, according to whom the spiritual and the secular should be kept strictly and rigidly apart. There is God or Divinity no doubt, and perhaps not even the Revelationist had the courage to emphasize the value and significance of Divinity in the way in which the Absorptionist did. But God or Divinity, according to the Absorptionist, can be understood only if we are scrupulous enough to keep Divinity aloof from and untouched by the empirical and mundane. Whatever the significance of the empirical and mundane may be, it cannot be equated with the Divine. And if we want to put that simple truth emphatically, we should say that nothing of that Divinity could survive if we reduced it to the state which was already only too familiar to us with its frank limitation. As some of these God-intoxicated Absorptionists held, if the human mind comes to lose even the hopes of a Divine existence in some far-off time when by a strict passage through this vale of tears the human mind has qualified itself for divine realization, that would be a dire calamity for the race. They would not call it an act of profanation to bring down Divinity to this earth, so that it may be entangled in the wheels of birth and death, they would call it an attempt to commit an act of suicide.

The distinction between the spiritual and secular, therefore, was not obliterated but kept in as pure a state as possible, and as a direct result of it the varied functions and interests in the social scheme were not wantonly mixed up. The political, economic, and religious were kept apart and the life and practice which corresponded to them had their own organization to themselves. The State was not the Church, nor was the world of business the world of politics. We have to preserve our body, reproduce our species, keep order in our society, and lead a cultural life. We have also, equally, to lead a religious life. And it is true that the one object of all these varied activities which are

distinct and unique is to qualify ourselves for achieving salvation or absorption in Divinity.

But it does not follow that while we are preserving our body and reproducing our species we are functioning in the same way as when we are praying or trying to think out the meaning of the universe. It is conceivable that some of us may not pray at all, much less think. It is equally conceivable that the whole of our energy may be exhausted in thinking or praying, so that none is left for the function of preserving our body or reproducing our species. Why then should we be anxious to mix up all these functions when they are not only different but do not function for a common goal. How then could we call the act of prayer religious if we are to call the act of eating religious too?

And yet no Absorptionist denied that all these acts are spiritual by their nature. The religious act is just as spiritual as the act of eating or reproducing the species, precisely because they all have the same end in view, salvation or absorption in Divinity. Nothing happens on this earth, whether in the shape of human action or that of organic or inorganic activity, which can have any other end or significance than that of realizing Divinity or becoming truly divine.

In other words, a distinction was made between the spiritual and religious. The act of prayer was called religious as distinguished from the act of preserving the body or reproducing the species. And both these acts were called spiritual in so far as they aimed directly at salvation or absorption in Divinity.

The distinction could be made precisely because the distinction between the divine and non-divine was preserved. In so far as Divinity was not twisted, as it were, into the coils of the mundane and limited, it was possible to keep the political and economic distinct from the religious. The State need not be confused with the Church, nor should the business mart be mixed up with either the State or the

Church. As they are all limited functions, none of them can claim to dominate or rule over the others. In none of them can it be supposed that the divine or absolute truth appeared. So that as you cannot mix them up on the ground that they are all but phases of the Divine Evolution, so you cannot claim that any one of them is superior or inferior to the others.

Incidentally, there was no occasion for protecting the home of God or God's existence. God could conceivably take care of Himself—as an immortal Chinese said; we need not even pray to God, as if it were necessary to remind God of His duties towards the human race. Religious wars had no foundation in fact precisely because all religious faiths and beliefs in their limited way aimed at exactly the same Divinity. In so far as in no religion, in whatever form it might have expressed itself, was God present, and as all religious activities were strictly limited and determinate in their character, it was inconceivable that a warfare on behalf of religious faiths could be legitimately staged.

CHAPTER III

NATURE OF RELIGIOUS EFFORTS

The two social orders not only differed on every point but failed to realize their ideals—nature of the religious efforts of the human race—total result a failure—reason of the failure.

If we keep in mind the fundamental differences between the two schools of religious thought as to the relation between the State and Church and the nature and meaning of society, it may be perfectly easy for us to follow the whole history of the human race. Perhaps unless we keep in mind this distinction we may not understand the strange fact that while both of them professed the ideals of social good in the highest terms conceivable they developed different and even incompatible social institutions to carry those ideals into practice. And, what is even stranger than this deliberate variance in technique, those ideals remained unfulfilled in spite of devoted and strenuous efforts to realize them.

It need not necessarily be a travesty of truth to hold that the strictly religious effort of the human race did not bring peace to the human family; it was earnestly hoped that it would. Perhaps, as mankind, after a rude shock on the economic and political plane, turned anxiously to religion for peace and assurance, it had to put up with a worse fate and a more profound disappointment. There can be no question that the promise that was held out in the religious world was at once more absolute and complete than anything ever offered in the economic and political. Mankind was promised salvation and no mere relief from discomfort or freedom from pain. And yet mankind never was in such travail as to-day, though for thousands of years those profound promises for salvation have been steadily offered and earnestly sought. It would be rank cynicism to insinuate

after this that it was man's brute nature or caprice planted in the depths of his soul that was responsible for this sad predicament. Even the unsophisticated can see that a God who so fails to deal with the brute or with caprice which could hold up the course of God's universe was not the God that mankind sought. Such a God was subject to the same fate as mankind and deserved their pity, like the rest of creation. The God who promised salvation was expected to solve the riddle which mankind could not, the riddle of the brute, or caprice. There was no need for a God if the riddle was not there. Mankind was quite competent to deal with all things that did not appear as riddles, and if God too, like mankind, was powerless to deal with riddles there was no need to pray or invoke blessings for escaping the agony of fate.

And the gravity of the situation does not ease, even if it is conceded that there are cases on record of pious men and women who did reach salvation and enjoy profound peace. Perhaps they did or they did not. For mankind, whose fate has hitherto been to grope in the dark subterranean passages of life, such cases of salvation can only stand as mystery, in the same way as blessedness of divine peace stood in the realm of Heaven while the whole universe was steeped in sorrow. Gautama Buddha repeatedly said that not before the lowliest creature on earth was able to partake of the bliss of salvation could there be salvation for any creature, however high. It may be blasphemy to question the claim that salvation was not only an ideal but a fact, but it is very hard to believe that either God or any of His creatures ever had it. The issue of religion is still as unclear as ever it was, and it would be a mistake to claim that the last word about either salvation or Divinity has been said. Why should it be a matter for surprise if we actually find that the two competing religious schools of human history failed to realize their ideals in spite of the fact that they professed them in the highest terms conceivable, and literally bled to death to carry them into practice?

And it is too late in the day to urge that they did not profess such ideals, or failed to put forth their best to carry out those ideals. Both the schools honestly and sincerely professed peace and goodwill to man on earth and blessedness of joy in Heaven, and both believed in Divine Grace and strict, ascetic practice as part and parcel of religious life. Nothing short of the kingdom of God on earth, or the Divine Life itself, was held up as the rightful or legitimate goal of man. And it would be stupid to forget that these high ideals were sought to be worked out in a spirit of humility and with as high a degree of efficiency as possible. Whether we look at the devotion and humility with which they worked for these ideals, or at the enormous sacrifices that they made, there is nothing to choose between them. The records of both these schools stand out as glorious instances of long and arduous pilgrimage through life, unmindful of the dark vicissitudes that invariably crossed its path.

And when we turn from the life of thought and action to the equally earnest and fervent life of religious emotion, we find vivid instance of artistic creation in the history of both.

In the course of long centuries they built firmly and unwaveringly not only in the heart of cities, towns, and villages, where, like bees in a beehive, men, women and children move about, but built also in the midst of opulent nature or calm and solemn environment. They built temples of enormous proportions as a model or symbol of the far-flung universe, with its myriad phases and forms carved in exquisite beauty and solemn grandeur. They built Stupas and Biharas, holding in their many-halled and cloistered bosom conclaves of the human race pondering deeply on the profound problems of life and death. They built pagodas rising over countless dwellings of men, arranged tier on tier like regimented millions of doves quietly swooping down on terraced fields. They built mosques of chiselled delicacy trying to pierce the blue of the sky for a glow

from Heaven, with morning, noon and evening delight of joy, to persuade the human race to believe that God's message had been delivered. They built stately cathedrals, solemn in their proportioned, uplifting appeal to God for His infinite mercy to humankind.

And all these symbols of men's witness to Divinity, wrought out of the heart's deepest yearning, spread out in every nook and corner of earth to establish God's reign and sovereignty over all things on earth below.

They stood like beacons on mountain ranges, the mother of all that nourishes the plains, with their massive hold on earth; and sang prayers to God in the Heavens night and day in graceful unison with the deep, pure snow that throbbed and throbbed with the eternal planets that lighted the passage of darkness, as if to smooth out the path of Divine approach. They stood on endless undulating plains with nothing but sand as their garment, or grains from the sunbeam as they are called, preaching the gospel of hope; or on rich, fertile fields where the golden corn moves with the swaying wind on the hills, blue hills arrayed in the mist of dawn or clear northern lights, receding for mile on mile into the ever-calling stretch of the far-flung sky. Rivers running like cascades down deep, blue steps of multi-storied mountains, or through deep-cut passes between granite walls standing in all the grandeur of ruined cities, held these supreme masterpieces of art on mossy banks embowered in green. Forests, even dense forests where giant trees, upright or spreading like primordial beings nodding to one another their secrets of all times; richly wooded hills, standing in the peaty-coloured, rushing waters that carry the boulders and the fruits of human labour to the plains, and the moving, meandering lakes that sparkle in all the colours of the sun as they wantonly skirt and skirt innumerable islands, spreading on all sides till they are lost in distant seas—held them as the only witness God left on earth.

And then lastly, where the light, the strange light that the sun in its gentlest mood sends to the arctic air after the snows are gone, and the sap in haste goes back to the head of the trees to bring out their luxuriant green, and all the flowers that slept through the long winter night come out to watch it—lofty, domed piles of red brick, exquisitely proportioned, arose to send up prayers of rejoicing to the Lord and Master of the universe.

And it is not merely in the congregated millions of Nature but in the ever-moving pilgrimage of men that began in the early dawn of human civilization, that man's witness to Divinity is marked.

But, strangely enough, whatever may be the grandeur or solemnity of nature where they built, and built magnificently, and however devotedly they might have professed and practised peace and goodwill to men on earth, they did not approach their end by the self-same route or interpret it in the self-same way. The institutions that they built to carry out their end clashed one with another; and the peace and goodwill that resulted from their wholehearted devotion and unflinching sacrifice took different shapes. What one understood by the blessedness of joy in heaven was totally different from what the other understood by it, as if they had altogether different sources of origin. Even the stately and delicate structures of beauty which were erected to symbolize that blessedness of joy in heaven, whether in stone or brick or wood, either gave beauty altogether different faces or practically hid her real face for ever. Even Nature, which served as the setting in which these symbolic works of art arose, did not appear to be the same beneficent Nature. By a strange destiny in the career of both of them, there was a dark and sinister prelude which preceded their song of joy; and it was so unmistakably dark that it has not been possible as yet for serious human minds to lose themselves in that song of joy. As a great critic once most painfully said, art which symbolizes

victory at the cost of precious human life stands literally in a pool of blood. It never can shed its gruesome origin or look like a pure work of art that Nature, for the solace of the human mind, painted in the bed of lotus on the blue serenity of a lake. Perhaps the poet might say that it is not beauty that has been the theme of the universe so far.; perhaps the whole of God's creation has been just fashioning tools or collecting materials for some distant birth. Whatever the explanation may be, it has not been possible so far to achieve any result without a flaw in it. The best of our achievements in any sphere of life has only a relative worth. And if we want to know how the flaw appeared in man's creation, or why it should have been necessary for man to survive by compromising his faith, we must go back to the conceptions of society which it has been possible so far to hold. And both conceptions sprang directly from the two contrasted views of religious experience: (1) the view which the idea of revelation implied; (2) the view which the idea of absorption meant.

CHAPTER IV

RE-INTERPRETATION OF THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE

The religious issue has to be re-interpreted—the conception of Divinity and the relation between God and man have to be re-examined—it means fundamentally re-examination of the metaphysical position about the unlimited and limited—analysis of the two notions—the outstanding confusion—a fresh metaphysical system is necessary—the theory of the actual and possible in the place of the unlimited and limited.

But it is not a fact that this extremely serious issue is altogether obvious or patent to all. There are still many who exclusively believe in either the one or the other view. Not only has there been no third view, except perhaps a considerable position which does not want to commit itself, but there has been a never-ceasing dispute and rivalry between the two schools of faith. As if it is extremely hard for either of them to confess their weakness or deficiency, not to say discard the exclusive claim to represent the cause of Divinity! The strangest fact of contemporary history is that while each one has to struggle hard to maintain its bare existence, there is no sign yet of chastening in their virile claim to exclusiveness or self-sufficiency. There are two noted phenomena in the modern world:

(*a*) Religion has found it increasingly hard to defend its claim against the frankly secular view of life. Honestly it is difficult to choose between the spiritual view of the universe and the outspoken intellectual or scientific view.

(*b*) The forms of religious faith that are still surviving make the same old effort to dominate one another as if nothing ever happened to damage the solid ground or support of their faiths.

If, however, the real issue is not lost under the pressure of disputes and controversies that are mostly of political

and economic growth, its main features will consist chiefly in an analysis or review of the precise meaning of Divinity. For the differences between the two competing social schemes, with their rival modes and techniques in dealing with social and religious problems, did not truly arise till they differed about the relation of Divinity to man. And analysis of their diverse views about that conception means that we have to deal with two distinct metaphysical positions about what has been known as the unlimited and limited in tradition.

We have to keep in mind that the two schools of thought believed that the unlimited and the limited were positive facts rather than hypotheses or fictions. Both schools unanimously held that Reality was equally unlimited and limited. There was no disagreement between them about that fundamental assumption. This is the first metaphysical position. If, however, disagreement between them arose, it did with regard only to the relation between the unlimited and the limited. And this is the second metaphysical position of which we must take account. We have to note that while according to the Revelationist the unlimited became the limited, it was the limited which became the unlimited so far as the Absorptionist was concerned.

And we cannot deal with either position fully without discussing the whole issue of Reality. In fact, an enquiry to find out whether the social schemes were bound to end in failure and compromise is in the last analysis an enquiry into the nature of Reality. We cannot come to a conclusion about the social schemes or the techniques or the two metaphysical positions we have mentioned above without a full-dress investigation into the nature of Divinity or Reality. It means a recapitulation of our whole position as to the metaphysical claim. And we might start this process with a brief reference to a very sound traditional criticism on the issue of the unlimited and the limited.

That criticism was that it was as impossible that the unlimited should become the limited as that the limited

should become the unlimited. It was a very sound criticism, and there is no reason why we should not fully endorse it. It is inconceivable that either transformation should take place. Even if we assume that there are such things as unlimited and limited realities, it is impossible to see how either of them can pass over to the other, precisely because they are incompatible with one another.

But it is not possible that we can assume that Reality could at the same time be both unlimited and limited or be either of them. Not only is transformation not possible between the unlimited and limited, it is inconceivable that there can be any such entity as unlimited or limited Reality. The whole issue about the unlimited and limited Reality was a myth. We have already discussed the impossibility at great length in our metaphysic. Tradition did not raise the issue and so it periodically became cynical or sceptical and wasted its criticism.

And exactly for the same reason it was altogether a mistake to try to find out what types of social schemes could be raised on the two contrasted assumptions: (*a*) the unlimited became the limited; (*b*) the limited became the unlimited. Such an attempt was bound to fail precisely because there was no such thing as the unlimited or limited. It could not possibly give rise to stability or security in the actual social systems; it could only end in periodic disaster or compromise, as it actually did.

It was unfortunate that traditional mind did not suggest any alternative metaphysical position nor a social scheme which implied a different structure from that of the Revelationist and the Absorptionist. Its total achievement failed to induce a constructive effort but led instead to a veiled cynicism and blind dogmatism which is known as orthodoxy, or polite conviction. Gradually there came on the scene a strong tendency to break down the old ramparts of faith, as if it did not matter what one professed or practised. Sooner or later the issue of life crystallized into a desperate

effort to live for the moment, with the aid of any means that seemed to suit the immediate need. It made no difference to men and women whether a race or culture or humanity or the universe or even God survived any longer than the brief span of man's existence, provided the immediate interest was safe. Time set the pace and the range of that span, and time meant what the observable or countable data of human experience could guarantee or ensure. Even inside that strictly bounded horizon the test of certainty wavered between the average of probability and just the robust animal faith. There was nothing within the whole scope of human speculation which crossed the shadows of the distant horizon and sought deliberately the light of what the philosophers professed as the eternal or universal.

And yet there was no sound reason why the critic should have so recklessly let in the sceptic and been responsible for all this wasteful confusion. There is enough room for criticism, and it is necessary that the critic must expose the deficiency or inconsistency of any opinion or practice that the theorists might have advocated if necessary. Nobody ever suggested that inconsistency was a sign either of truth or goodness in a theory or practice, whatever their claims might be. It was imperative, on the contrary, that the deficiency or inconsistency of a theory be removed and the theory reformulated and made consistent.

But it does not follow that because a theory or practice is frankly inconsistent we must be sceptical about it and straightway suggest its abandonment or burial. For we cannot abandon or totally discard a theory or practice so long as we have not discovered another theory or practice to put in its place. There is all the difference between questioning a theory or practice and the fatal act of discarding it. We can never discard or reject a theory or practice, whatever its inconsistency or deficiency; we can only replace it by another which must be, at least, more consistent and robust. The sceptical claim that incon-

sistency is sufficient reason for abandonment runs on the assumption that the Negative is much more true or valid than the positive. We discussed the truth at great length in the opening chapter of this treatise. That claim, as we have shown, has no validity. Besides, it is also common human experience that so long as we have not found something better to do and believe in, we have to carry on with what we have so far been cherishing, even though that might be deficient or imperfect. The sceptical alternative that we should abandon it on the ground of imperfection is suicidal, and we cannot conscientiously choose complete inaction in preference to what we call incomplete or deficient living.

What is necessary is that a fresh metaphysical position has to be constructed, in the light of which alone one could remove the prevailing confusion. There must at any rate be a more robust criticism, the aim of which should be constructive rather than sceptical. We have to replace the traditional conception of the unlimited and the limited by a more consistent conception of Reality, and with the aid of that conception we have to replace also the views of the Revelationist and the Absorptionist with all their social consequences. And if by any chance we succeed in taking this extremely necessary step we may legitimately expect that the existing theories and the practices and institutions that followed from them must cease—but not a moment too soon.

The question of immediate importance, it follows, is to find out whether the view of Reality which we have already formulated will serve the purpose of removing the widespread confusion, and suggest a definite change in the social schemes which the Revelationist and the Absorptionist have so far advocated. Can we claim that the metaphysic we took so much pains to elaborate would not only correct the misconceptions of the unlimited and the limited but remove the two outstanding illusions of human history:

(*a*) the unlimited became the limited; (*b*) the limited became the unlimited?

We do not see any reason why the distinction between the Actual and Possible that we have formulated should not replace the old distinction between the unlimited and the limited. We are confident that it will remove the traditional difficulties.

It might be necessary, however, to recapitulate the main position of our metaphysical claim before we proceed to discuss its bearing on the prevailing confusion in thought and practice. Such a recapitulation can do only good and no harm, precisely because the position we are advocating is much too strange and unusual to be grasped and appreciated without frequent reference or repeated analysis.

CHAPTER V

THE STRICTLY RELIGIOUS PROBLEM

Recapitulation of our main position by a fresh analysis of the laws of thought—relation between "actual" and "possible" and "absolute" and "relative"—re-statement of the claim of the Negative—acceptance of our view of Reality is bound to solve the difficulty between the two types of social order—the actual solution will appear in our treatise on ethics—the strictly religious problem—human faith in Divinity never failed—true significance of the attempt to deny Divinity—the theory of covenant between God and man—analysis—problem of God is the problem of human suffering—the religious issue strictly is the issue of worship and mystical experience—analysis—two implications: (1) individual and the absolute; (2) historical and mystical Reality—the conceptions so far understood have no meaning—the religious issue has to be re-interpreted.

It is not necessary that we should repeat the whole argument in detail. It is enough if we just remind our readers that the main and central position came out of a fresh interpretation of the Law of Contradiction. Besides, the Cartesian technique of doubting which we took the liberty of re-interpreting proved to be legitimately useful. We see no reason why our enquiry into the main sceptical claim, in the light of this technique, should not be approved by the philosophic world. If the laws of thought have any sense, our contention about the positive Reality stands, and it would be waste of time to try to destroy the credit of those laws. We took pains to prove how the laws stood as the only unquestionable feature of human experience.

Yet we could not take a single step forward after the truly essential discovery that the sceptic, who made every possible effort to establish the case of the Negative, was fatally wrong. It was one thing to prove that Reality was and Nothing was not, quite a different thing to define or characterize Reality.

Honestly, we could not avail ourselves of any of the known and familiar methods either of history or contemporary thought for cutting new ground.

At such a critical moment, when we were almost on the point of giving up further enquiry, the new interpretation of the laws of thought suddenly appeared. We found it to be not only legitimate but perfectly capable of opening up fresh approaches to Reality. We took pains to point out that the Law of Contradiction clearly implied two distinct forms of existence, in so far as it made two definite statements in symbolic form: (*a*) A and Not-A cannot co-exist; (*b*) A and Not-A are opposites.

We interpreted these two statements to mean that there was a clear indication in the law as to the dual character of existence. In other words, A has not only to exist all by itself and function as A in its pristine, immaculate, and absolute state, it has also to exist in relation to its contrary, the Nothing. Evidently two distinct forms of existence were definitely implied or foreshadowed: (*a*) the absolute or the monistic or singular; (*b*) the relative or non-monistic or plural.

We described these two forms or instances of existence by the terms "Actual" and "Possible," and an additional reason for that specific description was derived from the fact that the Negative was not by any means considered by the Law of Contradiction to be inconceivable or impossible. On the contrary, the Negative was understood in two distinct senses: (*a*) in relation to A in one form of existence, Not-A was impossible; (*b*) in relation to A in the other form of existence Not-A was not impossible by virtue of the fact that it stood in the relation of opposition to A. If by any chance it were a fact that Not-A was altogether inconceivable or impossible, there would be no occasion for the second statement—A and Not-A are opposites. There would be no occasion even for formulating the law.

But once we granted that Not-A was not impossible and at the same time realized that Not-A was not capable

of co-existing with A, the term "possibility" appeared to be the only term which could suitably describe Not-A when it was in a relation of opposition to A.

If Not-A, for instance, cannot exist when A exists by itself, it followed that absolute existence was impossible to Not-A.

But that did not imply that Not-A was not capable of existence at all. On the contrary, the fact remained that it was bound to exist as a possibility on the ground that it was not impossible. Its existence as a possibility followed not as a matter of chance, but of necessity, and that for the simple reason that the Law of Contradiction was meaningless without it.

The question of existence, in consequence, was not a question whether Reality is or Reality is not, but whether the relation between Reality and the Negative is one of contraries. Besides, if the relative state had to be called possible, there was no reason why we should not have to call the absolute state actual, if only to preserve its distinction from the relative. And so we did, and we did it under the strict injunction of the Law of Contradiction, than which nothing more authoritative or fundamental can be devised. The origin of the distinction between the Actual and Possible, therefore, can be traced directly to the Law of Contradiction, and we see no reason why the terms "possibility" and "actuality" should be left at the mercy of either the literary genius or the psychological analyst. On the contrary, we should accept them as two major terms that conscientiously give a shape or form to the character of Reality and its Negative, with which alone our hopes and joys as much as our sorrows and miseries lie inextricably bound up.

It may, however, be contended that the distinction between the Actual and Possible is not half so fundamental as the distinction between the Absolute and Relative. It may even be suspected that the distinction between the Actual

and Possible is not only not logical but literary or metaphorical.

The contention is perfectly sound so far as the logical claim of the Absolute and Relative is concerned, but it is clearly mistaken in its suspicion that the distinction between the Actual and Possible is literary or metaphorical. The truth is that the Actual and Possible are almost synonymous with the Absolute and Relative. We can consistently use the terms Actual and Possible for the terms Absolute and Relative in so far as they apply to the same identical Reality.

And yet the two pairs of terms need not be taken as strictly synonymous, precisely because they do not indicate the same features of Reality.

We should call Reality "absolute" if we propose to suggest that the Reality is in itself and by itself. The term "actual," on the other hand, which stands for the same Reality, should be used to indicate a function which does not involve either conflict or harmony. It indicates realization pure and simple, with which knowledge or relative existence has nothing to do.

Similarly, the term "relative" is expected to indicate the mere fact of relation. The term "possible," on the other hand, refers to the nature of relation. In other words, it refers to the fact that an effort is made by Reality to realize an object. This effort both fails and succeeds. It refers to conflict or harmony, which registers failure and success respectively. All the four terms, therefore, are essential and neither pair should be valued for its linguistic convenience.

The contention against the Actual and Possible therefore is groundless and would not have arisen if the significance of either pair of terms were truly known. The fact is that the Actual and Possible were never understood in the way in which they should have been understood; nor were the Absolute and Relative. The Absolute and the Relative were the unlimited and limited of tradition, while the Actual and Possible stood literally for the Actual and Potential.

It was not known that the relation between the Actual and Possible was the same as that which exists between the Absolute and Relative. Nor was it understood that they had no resemblance to the unlimited and limited, or Actual and Potential, precisely because the latter did not exist at all except as fictions of the human mind.

Proverbially, tradition was obsessed by two distinctions: (*a*) the unlimited or absolute and the limited or relative; (*b*) the complete or formed and the incomplete or unformed. And these distinctions arose precisely because the conception of Reality was considered to be fundamentally monistic.

Reality was supposed to be singular; and the issue, therefore, arose as to how its complete and incomplete or unlimited and limited forms could be reconciled. The quandary in which centuries of effort were steadily lost may be altogether traced to this obsession. And if we did not lose our steps in that primeval bog it was because Reality appeared to us to be dual, and not monistic.

Questions, however, may still be raised as to the dual character of Reality. If Reality has to be accepted as unquestionably the only fact in existence, how is it that there should be such a thing as the relative state? If, again, Reality had to be liable to the disagreeable experience to which the finite or limited of tradition was proverbially subject, what is left to its absolute claim? Does not failure imply direct contradiction of the claim to absoluteness which Reality, according to this philosophy, inevitably possesses?

If Reality had to be in a state of relation, the simple reason for that eventuality was that there was no other alternative. If Reality, rather than the Negative had to be in existence, it had to be in both states, as we have already explained by an analysis of the law of Contradiction.

Conceivably the relative state could have been avoided if we were prepared to lose the absolute state as well. For the chance of escaping the relative state could arise only if the Negative had taken the place of Reality altogether.

It is easy logic that there cannot be a relative state if there is nothing at all. But the cost implied is evidently ruinous, as it was bound to involve the disappearance of the absolute state as well.

The main reason, again, why there was no other alternative to Reality than to be in a state of relation was that its contrary the Negative was by no means an impossibility. While there can be no question about the impossibility of its absolute claim to existence, the Negative could not be disposed of as the contradictory or the impossible. It had to be dealt with in some form or other. If it could not be recognized as co-eternal with Reality as absolute and complete, it had to be dealt with as a possibility or relative entity.

If, again, the Negative were truly impossible, the distinction between the contrary and contradictory would not arise. There would be only Reality, and neither the contradictory nor the two forms of the contrary: (*a*) conflict between incompatibles; (*b*) harmony between complementaries. But the experience of both the contrary and contradictory is just as real as the experience of Reality which is absolute. We cannot say that we do not come across instances where the attempt to make the positive co-exist with the Negative fails; nor can we deny the fact of conflict and harmony. The Negative, therefore, is essential if only for an explanation of these experiences.

Finally, experiences which are conveyed by such terms as "limitation," "necessity," "finiteness," "deficiency," "failure," etc., would be inexplicable if the conception of the Negative were altogether abandoned. There can be no way of accounting for them if we choose to hold that nothing but Reality exists as eternal and all-comprehensive. And it is too late in the day to deny that they are facts and not fiction. At any rate, no philosopher or mystic ever seriously suggested that they were not facts, although some of them were anxious to diminish the taint of their negative lineage

by christening them illusions. And in no case did anyone identify them with what they called Reality.

The truth is that it is not merely the Law of Contradiction that asserted the fact that the contrary was not impossible, by its straightforward claim that A and Not-A are opposites; the philosophers too, in so far as they found it necessary to deal with the facts of limitation, deficiency and illusion, had to admit that the contrary was not impossible.

Can we then discard or dispose of the relative as fiction and play with the orthodox Reality as the only valid conception, in spite of the fact that it made no provision for the Negative, whether as an outstanding rival to Reality or in the much milder shape of a disguise, such as the finite and limited world could safely provide? Have we not, on the contrary, to believe in the relative just as we have to believe in the absolute on the sole ground that it is the only sure sign of the validity of the Negative which is universally recognized as a fact? And if this legitimate conclusion does not appear to be totally inexplicable, what exactly is the form the real issue about Reality is likely to take?

Does the issue still remain one of accepting the orthodox conception of Reality which whole-heartedly excluded the Negative? And if we cannot accept such an inconceivable claim does it follow that we should surrender ourselves to the authority and patronage of what we have cherished as the finite, limited, and particular? Does the choice for us lie between these two competing illusions of history?

The main point of this metaphysic does not incline to the one any more than to the other position. Both the views are sufficiently orthodox; and for ourselves, we are prepared to discard both the orthodox conceptions: (*a*) the infinite, eternal and all-comprehensive Reality; (*b*) Reality as finite and particular and nothing but finite and particular. The position that we are prepared to put in their places is altogether different, as we have already seen.

But before we repeat it once again, it might be worth while

to mention that philosophic thought could not, in the course of long speculation, discard either of the two conceptions—the Absolute or Infinite, and the Relative or Finite. It was equally impossible for it either to equate the Finite with Reality or to make the Infinite truly finite. As it went on making experiment after experiment with either the one or the other, with intervals of compromise between them, the sense of the inevitability of both deepened, side by side with their age-long incompatibility. The view that we are going to repeat is an attempt to remove this anomaly; it is an attempt to preserve both the Infinite and Finite, and the Absolute and Relative, and that in a form which obviates all chance of clash between them.

And its simple and elementary claim is that Reality is both absolute and relative, though in alternation. We are confident that while Reality exists as absolute there is nothing in the wide universe to dispute its all-comprehensive claim or share the universe with Reality. The Negative is totally and completely out of existence as the Law of Contradiction so patently indicated. And it is this absolute existence of Reality that might have formed the theme of philosophic and mystic utterances.

But there is nothing in the fact or idea of absolute existence to make the idea or fact of the Negative altogether impossible; nor did it imply that it must necessarily function like the permanent and eternal Reality of tradition. On the contrary, Reality had to pass into the relative state as a matter of course if only to stand in relation to its contrary the Negative. By the Law of Contradiction, such a state was neither more nor less indispensable to Reality than the absolute state. Reality is bound to exist in itself just as much as in relation; it must exist apart and aloof from the Negative just as much as in intimate and direct relation with the Negative.

But this may be far too simplified a view of the Absolute and Relative to appeal easily to the philosophic mind.

It might be useful, however, if we suggest one or two points which all criticism, however induced and whatever its motive, might do well to keep in mind.

In the first place the central position of this metaphysic arose out of a simple and elementary truth—a frank recognition of the Negative. It stands or falls with the validity of that recognition. Tradition, as far as we know, honestly fought shy of the Negative. Its one systematic effort lay in the attempt to prove that Reality was and Nothing was altogether not. It never struck tradition that the Negative could be a possibility and as such perfectly harmless.

In the second place, the grounds on which this recognition was made were two:

(*a*) The obvious and unquestionable fact that the Negative was recognized directly by the Law of Contradiction. Both the contrary and contradictory were recognized by that Law. Tradition referred to the case of the contradictory alone.

(*b*) The Negative was implied also by all shades of opinion and practice, though not in so many words. This indirect recognition or implication took the shape of an acceptance of the finite or relative as fact. As we have shown already, nobody had the courage to claim seriously that the finite and particular must have been connected with the Absolute, either as a part of it, or its effect or manifestation; and as there was no *via media* between Reality and its contrary, the Negative, it meant that the particular, or Finite had to be taken as a part or effect of the Negative.

So that a rejection of our view, if it is deliberately intended, will practically mean a denial of the Law of Contradiction and a repudiation of the universal experience of the human race about the Negative. And it would be perfectly sensible to abandon this view if our philosophers make up their mind to abandon the Law of Contradiction, and repudiate the universal experience of the human race.

But if perchance our view is accepted instead of being

rejected, the difficulty that may still be raised in connection with the failure of the relative to realize the Absolute, on the ground that it implies contradiction of Reality, need not be overpowering. There can be no question that the failure is a fact which it would be stupid to deny—it is more than a fact, it was a necessity. But before it can be successfully interpreted as a contradiction of Reality, it has to be proved that the failure was bound to lead to the appearance of the Negative. It is obvious that nothing short of that proof can possibly constitute a case of contradiction.

But such a proof cannot by any means be given, and the grounds for its impossibility are two:

(*a*) "Nothing" cannot appear as an actuality or absolute, as we have already proved that Reality is and Nothing is not.

(*b*) The failure of the two possibilities, Possibility of Reality and Possibility of Nothing, to produce the actualities is bound to be succeeded by a stage of harmony between them. The stage of harmony is necessary for the same reason as the stage of conflict, and that reason is that both are instances of relation. In other words, if relation is a fact and necessity, both the instances of relation must exist or neither of them. And the necessity of relation is a direct implication of the Law of Contradiction.

We can therefore safely conclude that if it is impossible that the Negative can ever appear as absolute and actual, it follows that the failure of the relative to realize the Absolute cannot constitute its contradiction. What it can constitute is the contradiction of the traditional conception of the Absolute, that Reality is eternally present and endlessly functioning. That may well be a blessing in disguise.

And if we do replace the traditional conception, does it not follow that the two views, the unlimited became limited, the limited became unlimited, become meaningless? If there is no occasion for dealing with two such incompatible and inconceivable notions as the unlimited and the limited,

it cannot be necessary to relate them in the way in which the Revelationist and the Absorptionist did. On the other hand, the Absolute and Relative or the Actual and Possible are neither inconceivable nor are they related or connected in the way in which tradition supposed that the unlimited and the limited were. On the contrary, they represent two distinct and equally valid states of Reality—Reality in itself and Reality in relation.

Reality could not exist at all unless it were possible for it to exist in both these forms. That is what is meant by the existence of Reality and nothing more is to be said about it. The question can never arise whether the Absolute can become the Relative or the Relative can become the Absolute. They are distinct, unique forms and their function naturally is unique and distinct. And if we consider the question of their value and importance, they must be equally valuable and independent.

But if we accept this view of Reality, the whole question of social scheme which gave rise to this formulation becomes entirely a question of the relative Reality where alone human organization can appear. It is obvious that the Absolute Reality can have nothing to do with social schemes. And to find out whether the one or the other of the two social schemes we have referred to is valid, we have to go back to our account of the central end, universal technique and the three relationships that we discovered in connection with the world of possibilities.

It would be better if we took up this enquiry in our discussion of the ethical problem, where the analysis of human organization is in place. If we brought it up in our analysis of religious experience, we did so on the ground that the social schemes of the human race have been bound up with its religious conceptions. We had to show that neither the Revelationist nor the Absorptionist was right or correct about the original and final goal. We had to disprove the assumption that society or the social organiza-

tion was either a direct evolution of Divinity or had to eliminate the deficiency or limitation of the individuals, so that they could become truly unlimited and Divine. We shall see in our chapter on values and the organizations to realize them that neither society nor the human individuals who constitute it is deficient or limited, that whatever happens on the historical plane is just as unique and independent as what may have to be associated with the Absolute and Actual Reality. The Absolute does not become relative and thereby give rise to the whole course of social evolution, nor does the relative become absolute by shedding a deficiency or limitation. Both are self-sufficient and complete in themselves and are responsible for unique and independent experiences. If, for instance, we use the term "God" for the Absolute and "man" for the relative, it may be confidently asserted that they never meet but live their own lives with as much benefit and joy to themselves as it is ever possible to claim. And yet it need not be paradoxical to assert that the relative and possible produces nothing more than a certainty of the absolute, provided we keep in mind the fact that certainty of the Absolute is as unique and distinct a type of existence as the Absolute itself.

We might now close our historical review and start our analysis of the strictly religious claim. We have so far dealt with a broad outline of the historical situation and concluded that the religious history of the human race may be interpreted in terms of the two conceptions, Revelation and Absorption. We feel confident that whatever the range and peculiarities of the actual faiths and practices might be, we could with effort classify them all under one or the other of the two conceptions. The human race either wanted what has been known as the immediate or direct evidence of God or were prepared to wait for a sure and distant fulfilment—salvation.

There can be no question that the human race did not even for one moment believe that we could do without God.

Life has been much too severe and enigmatical for the human race to be dealt with by human ingenuity alone, and the few occasions when we took courage in both hands and denied God we did not mean to deny God. It was not a denial of Divinity so much as a solemn protest against what we seriously considered to be a violation of the covenant between God and man. What we meant by our denial was that God's clear promise to the human race has not been kept. Man did not have sufficient evidence of God's mercy though there was sufficient evidence of human suffering which God's mercy alone could heal. The denial of God by man was by no means a denial of Divinity but a clean protest that the signs or symbols that did service for Divinity were either weak or even false. The protest rested on the human claim that God must keep the covenant and the universe must be made free from all those dark events which gave no chance to the human soul for peace.

Can this profound and far-reaching claim of human history be true? Does it really rest on a covenant with God? Did God truly enter into a covenant with man?

We have to ask the question seriously whether the universe in which the human race lives rose out of a covenant, as the society of man is supposed to have risen out of a covenant among men? On the face of it, there seems to be no other means of explaining this perpetual claim by man that the universe, his home, must be made free, clean, and peaceful. If man by nature is not free to rule the affairs of his home, God must be responsible for the preservation of peace. If the birth of man is an event over which man has nothing to say, the responsibilities of that birth or the liabilities that accrue from it must be laid at the door of God, for God alone is the ruler and creator of the universe. Here is the root or source of the belief in the covenant between God and man—mankind ruled out the alternative which might have replaced God by the demon in the seat of authority and control. Here is man's essential faith in justice,

right, and all that makes for order and beauty. Mankind never abandoned its search for Divinity, nor did man ever cease to record his protest that the covenant was not kept and the promise was broken.

But the belief in the covenant was truly a belief in a legend. God never did or could give any promise, nor was the covenant made. There never was any God who could give a promise nor was there a man who could receive it. There was only this legend that God gave a promise to man, and the legend arose from the stark, unblushing fact that mankind suffered. One would seek in vain for evidence that there was God and that there was also man, between whom a covenant might arise, but there can never be doubt that suffering as an event took place from the very moment the universe began.

And one momentous feature of this event was that once it took place, it could never be unmade. Its dark impress on the soul and spirit of the universe was fixed and nothing that could ever happen could efface it or make it as if it never were. It is impossible not to think that one single instance of it, in whatever shape or form, made the whole universe liable to it, and for ever and ever. Its atonement could only mean that the whole universe must pass through it. Call it by whatever name you like, justice or dignity, there can be no other way to atone for a single instance of suffering than by making it the core of life. Or you may make of it a chance or opportunity for true and strong living, what people pointed out as its chastening tone. But the fact will never be falsified that suffering took place as an event, and nothing can take place in that universe again which will not be instinct with it.

The problem of Divinity is not the problem of the covenant between God and man; it is the problem of suffering. It is almost a paradox that there is nothing to choose between Divinity and suffering. Somehow or other Divinity was mixed up with it and it is the philosopher's

task to unravel that mystery and not to carry the tale of unjust suffering or blundering God any further. It will be our care now to show that we have missed, so far, the true import of suffering and never realized how near Divinity was to what we value as our own.

Let us proceed to discuss the religious issue in a strictly logical form.

Broadly speaking, there are two distinct ways in which the subject-matter of religious experience can be discussed by us. We can discuss that subject-matter in terms of either the object of religious worship or of mystical experience. And both terms are equally relevant and perfectly legitimate. Historically speaking, we come across both groups and individuals in all times and places who professed and practised either the one or the other form of religious faith.

Perhaps whole communities may be found in history who did not even know what true mystical experience of Divinity meant, and yet even to-day a considerable number in India alone seek nothing if not mystical experience. It is obvious again to point out, especially from the records of the modern age, how any form of mystical experience is treated with scant respect, either as legend or as false. And yet the deeper experience of mankind is perhaps never open to the public gaze. In any case, we cannot get down to the bottom of religious experience unless we consider both the instances of religious practice: (*a*) worship of God; (*b*) mystical experience of God. Whatever the value or validity of either experience, both are equally essential for the purpose of a philosophic enquiry.

And that enquiry means that we have to treat those experiences in the light of two logical problems: (1) the individual and the universal; (2) the historical and mystical. It is these logical issues which make religious conceptions complicated or difficult to understand. The reasons are obvious enough.

And yet the idea of the worship of God must necessarily

imply that God is an individual and not a universal or concept. When we claim that we can and do worship God, we have to believe that God is a person with whom communion is possible, who is in a position to listen to our prayer and decide in His infinite mercy to grant our prayer. It is inconceivable that God in the moment of prayer should appear to us as a concept or universal. We do clearly distinguish between personal God, the object of worship or thanksgiving and anything which has been described or interpreted as non-individual or universal.

On the other hand, the God of the mystics is clearly not an individual but the Absolute. When the mystic seeks absorption in the Divinity, he does so with the conviction that no other goal is conceivable, precisely because the Absolute is not an individual who can stand in relation to other individuals. There is a clear distinction between communion with God and absorption in Him, and the difference arises from the fact that communion implies relationship between existing individuals, while absorption means cessation of individuality.

There can be no question that the two religious experiences of communion or worship and absorption or salvation implied definitely the two fundamentally different logical conceptions: (*a*) the individual and the absolute; (*b*) the historical and mystical existence.

What is called communion with or worship of God, for instance, is not possible unless God and His devotee somehow happen to belong to the same historical universe, so that God's devotee may offer Him prayer and receive His blessings. Even if the whole question of prayer is reduced to a question of mere thanksgiving for all God's untold mercy, God must be within easy reach of His prayerful creatures to receive their offer. Somehow or other God had to become historical like His devotee, who had no other mode of existence to fall back upon. It is a different story whether the unlimited and infinite God could become a historical being even for

such a noble purpose as listening to the prayers of the human race.

On the other hand, absorption in God did equally imply that there must be the transcendental realm where God in His flawlessly unlimited power did reside. Salvation for the human individual could have no possible meaning if such a realm had not existed as a matter of fact. The mystical must be the indispensable implication of the historical reality. It is another story whether the historical could become the mystical even though no other sense could be attached to the historical. Somehow the mystical has to be there to make it possible for the historical human individual to come up to it and be absorbed in God.

And yet it must be carefully noted that neither side had any idea of denying altogether either the historical or the mystical existences. God, to both, was infinite, eternal, and perfect. The difference between them arose on the issue as to whether the Absolute became an individual, or the individual man became the Absolute, or whether the truly mystical reality became historical, or vice versa. Those who repudiated the mystical or the historical altogether were either the God-intoxicated or the man-intoxicated, and it serves no good purpose to identify them with the truly religious individuals who had too vivid a sense of both the spheres of existence.

The main issue, therefore, is whether we can accept the two forms of religious claim as consistent and valid, assuming that their validity lies inextricably bound up with the logical categories, individual or universal, or the historical or mystical. Is it possible that the claims could survive close criticism and searching analysis if the basis on which they stand is not any stronger than the precarious distinction between the individual and the universal, or the historical and the mystical?

We do not think that they can and it would make no difference to our view even if it can be conclusively proved

that they were the only religious claims hitherto known. And the reason why we hold such a strong position is that there is no foundation to the traditional conception of the individual and the universal, or the historical and mystical. If we have to discard our traditional notions of the individual and universal and the historical and mystical as logical categories we see no reason why we should preserve any superstructure which was built on the tacit assumption that they were accurate and adequate. A loss of the fundamental logical feature of our universe is bound to prove fatal to every other feature of it. We cannot survive as religious beings if we have ceased to exist as logical or rational beings. If human experience somehow ceased to be consistent, by reason of a sudden or gradual disintegration of the fundamental categories of reality and knowledge, it would be madness to cling to any belief or practice, whatever its massive claim on human regard. Consistency is not merely a sign of intellectual probity but the *sine qua non* of balanced existence.

Worship of a personal God, or absorption in the Absolute have to be discarded as false and erroneous views if there is no other way to uphold them than by means of the traditional or contemporary views of the individual and absolute.

But it does not follow that the human race should straightway discard religion or Divinity as altogether mythical and legendary. What follows is that we have to discover a new interpretation of the individual and universal, or the historical and mystical and reformulate the meaning and claim of Divinity.

There is no reason why the religious history of the human race, any more than its racial or cultural history, should be discarded as myth, simply because our philosophers found it difficult to rationalize them. If we do not resolve in a body to commit economic suicide, even though we cannot settle our economic difficulties in a rational way, should we

seek a religious demise, as if that were the only way out of religious difficulties? It would be much wiser and more consistent for the human race to fight for their religious belief than that they should discard it as myth or legend. And even if we have to treat it as myth or legend, we might try and bear in mind that it was a myth or legend of a rare type which by the sanctity of its age alone might be almost indistinguishable from truth. For does not all truth, except that which is strictly logical, survive by sheer persistence, which in our scientific vocabulary is called repeated verification? The persistence of a belief or practice may be an evidence that there is, perhaps, less likelihood of the persistent idea or claim being false than of the individual human minds who happen to be judging it being right. It is a fact that none of us escapes the fate of the bad thinker and worse logician altogether. Thought, after all, is not free any more than the emotional impulses. Why then should the accumulated evidence of ages be swept away by the criticism of any one particular age, especially when we know what principally worked behind that criticism.

CHAPTER VI

THEORY OF DIVINITY

Analysis of the term Divinity—our theory—Absolute and Relative Divinity—theory of Absolute Divinity—theory of Relative Divinity—meaning of the term "Satan"—Relation between God and Satan—bearing of our view on contemporary mind.

THE issue is, can we preserve both the forms of the religious claim and retain the age-long conception of Divinity, even if we have to question seriously the basis on which they have hitherto stood? Can we reformulate them and re-establish on a much securer basis our idea of God and the forms of religious practices which we have hitherto followed?

To answer this question we have to find out first what the term "Divinity" should be understood to mean in our conception of Reality.

It seems to be obvious that the term "God" can and should be used as a synonym for the term "Reality"—the only other term which is equally fundamental is the term "Nothing," or "Negative"—assuming that the term "God" is to be taken as a fundamental term. In the last analysis, whatever we might be dealing with must be classified under either the one or the other term—Reality or its contrary, the Negative. There is nothing else that we can think of outside or beyond what these two terms signify. And as the term "God" cannot be equated with the term "Nothing," there is no alternative for us but to identify it with Reality.

Incidentally, the worst that ever happened to the term "God" was an exception taken to it by a notorious school of theorists on the ground of its insignificance. But that misfortune did not eliminate the term from the philosophic vocabulary nor reduce Divinity to the status of the Negative. On the contrary, this piece of calculated violence was no

worse than a suspicion that it was the Demon who existed in this universe and ruled our destiny, rather than the benevolent God. As it was difficult for the atheist to be indifferent to his prospects, he had to insist, like so many others, that the history of the universe did not bear any trace of God's existence, since it had not sufficient signs of justice, goodwill, or peace, which were the essential marks of Divinity. It was least likely that the atheist meant to define God or Divinity as the Negative, or to imitate the role of the absolute sceptic. He was but the atheist, with a case against his rival, the theist, and cannot be identified with the absolute sceptic.

But if we have to equate God with Reality, it follows that we have to deal with two distinct forms of God's existence: (*a*) God as absolute in Himself; (*b*) God as relative, in relation to His contrary, the Negative.

It may be strange but it is impossible for us to keep God dissociated from the Negative; and in so far as we find it necessary to keep God in relation to the Negative, the whole question of creation and all the complicated issues about limitation, suffering, etc., to which it gave rise, will be directly associated with God. As we shall soon see, God in relation to the Negative is only another name for the whole universe where all these complicated issues arise. Whatever happens in that universe, whether to our dismay or satisfaction, happens as part and parcel of God's own career.

But a statement about the duality of Gods may not improbably sound like Polytheism, and those who advocate monotheism rather too strictly may unwittingly take it as blasphemy or sacrilege against divine omnipotence.

The issue of monotheism and polytheism, however, is logically, at bottom, the same issue as is known as monism and pluralism. So that if we discarded both monism and pluralism in our metaphysical enquiry, we have to discard their religious parallels equally. This must be obvious enough.

No doubt God, to us, has to exist in two forms in succession if existence is possible to God, if God is not another name for

the Negative. But that is by no means the same thing as existing as a monistic or pluralistic divinity. Strictly speaking, there can be no question as to whether God is one, or whether there are two or many Gods; there can be only an absolute God and a relative God alternating with one another. The question of identity, whether of Divinity or any other entity, is a question of duality, which is as remote from the conception of monism and pluralism as it is distinguishable from the notion of parts and portions. The absolute and relative forms do not constitute a pluralistic situation any more than they can be regarded as parts of one whole, or as complete and incomplete.

Our way of describing the two forms of divine existence has nothing whatever to do with the old view of monotheism and theism. There can be no question of confusing the Absolute and Relative God with the Gods of monotheism and polytheism.

Nor is it necessary that the Relative God be regarded as a diminutive form of the Absolute God, precisely because the Relative God is not a mere partial expression of the Absolute God, nor an effect of it. The Relative God is just as unique and self-sufficient as the Absolute God. They do not exist together nor interact with each other. If the Relative God is not the incomplete or partial form of the Absolute God, the Absolute God is not the eternal and permanent of tradition. Both are profoundly real and scrupulously unique rather than fictions of pious hope or of an agitated mind.

But a closer account of the relationship between the Absolute God and the Relative God can be given only after we have dealt with the nature and integrity of each.

And yet, strangely enough, it does seem inconceivable that there could possibly be any enquiry as to the nature and character of the Absolute God. Perhaps the strangest conclusion of this metaphysic is that God in Himself, or the Absolute Reality, is not and cannot be the subject-matter of any logical enquiry. What is achievable is but an enquiry with regard to its existence or non-existence; and

the most that can happen as a result of that enquiry is that we can only be in doubt or belief about it. For the rest, the issue clearly is not one of enquiry at all, but, strictly speaking, one of "realization." However strange it may sound, we literally and truly become the Absolute God. Nothing more happens and nothing else can happen.

The conclusion is extremely unusual, and it would have been rather awkward for us to uphold this strange conclusion if we had not had the rare fortune to meet with a confirmation of it by the most ancient tradition of the human race. The Hindu saints and philosophers deliberately shut out all enquiry into the nature of the Absolute Divinity, on the ground that nothing that can be said about it could by any chance reach the core of its being. Here is at least the confirmation of our suggestion that the Absolute is not a subject-matter for enquiry.

We may not agree with our ancestral conception of the Absolute, even as we may differ from our ancestors as to what knowledge means or is. Besides, if it is suggested that their refusal to admit that knowledge of the Absolute is possible was based on the assumption that human knowledge is limited, we may have to disagree again. But all these disagreements do not contradict the fact that we both fully agree that the Absolute, whatever it might be, is beyond all enquiry, and can be the subject-matter for realization and nothing else. We value this agreement with our ancestors on what is obviously the most profound feature of human experience.

And we shall proceed at once to explain why we hold such a strange view.

It will be remembered that as a result of conflict and harmony which form the two phases of existence in the world of possibility, the total achievement of that world does not amount to anything more than or different from the fact of belief or certainty about Absolute Reality. Whatever happens in that universe, whether on the human

plane or in the non-human sphere, inevitably takes this final form. We can say nothing different, even if we prefer to talk about the economic, the political or the social activities of man. Whether we function as physical or physiological or psychical beings, it need not be supposed that we may be achieving any result different from belief in or certainty about Absolute Reality.

But this belief or certainty, which is the result of harmony, is preceded by a stage of conflict in which nothing but confusion or uncertainty prevails. If harmony gives rise to belief, conflict results in uncertainty about the Absolute Reality and the Negative.

It is a cardinal principle of this philosophy that we have nothing but doubt or belief with regard to the Absolute state as the result of the varied activities or events which happen in the world of possibility or the relative world.

And the enquiry that is directly stimulated by this cardinal principle is bound to show that we cannot know the Absolute God but only realize it. If, for instance, the human mind has to be invariably either in doubt or belief about the Absolute Reality it can never be in a position to ask questions about its nature or character. Can either doubt or belief ever be a suitable mood or condition in which such an enquiry can arise?

We will take first the case of doubt, and we might find out what happens in the case of the atheist who is not very far removed from the man or woman who is in doubt about Divinity. The atheist, as we all know, makes no such enquiries, as he is convinced that even if there were no doubt about his own existence, Divinity was nothing but a myth or chimera. The man or woman in doubt about Divinity will certainly behave differently from the atheist, as it will not strike them as altogether rational to deny Divinity. But if we suppose that the atheist, for some reason or other, happened to be reduced to their position and became less downright, could we believe that he would change his procedure about Divinity and begin to ask questions about

His nature and character? He would not; and that for the simple reason that the atheist, who is a sceptic, is a sober person. He is not in a position to make a parade of his conviction that God did not exist, any more than of his firm faith in his own existence. The doubt in his mind will undermine all claims, whether about Divinity or about his own atheistic personality.

Even the mystic, when doubt overpowers his faith, does not spend his valuable time in making fresh enquiries about the nature and character of God. As is well known he only bewails his lot, proclaiming the excruciating pain of his misfortune that God has forsaken him. Even his poignant lamentation leaves him as the doubt mounts, as they say, to the brain. It seems to be simple truth that confusion or doubt is not the right moment, or the best opportunity for starting an enquiry. It does not seem at all possible that we can have any chance of asking questions about God in His absolute state, if and when we are truly in doubt about Divinity.

And certainly the issue of that enquiry does not revive, even if we succeed in getting rid of that confusion and come to entertain belief or certainty about the Absolute Reality or Divinity. For the only conceivable possibility after the belief or certainty is the actual existence or realization of that Reality. It is difficult to see how there could be a third state between the belief in or certainty about Reality and the realization of it. What is possible is that either Reality or God as He is exists and functions or a doubt or a belief with regard to Him exists in His place. To introduce any other state between the two is to imply that one can conceive of something additional to Reality or God and His contrary, the Negative. For the belief and doubt are all that can conceivably take place as a result of the relation between the Reality and the Negative. But can we conceive of anything which is neither the Reality nor the Negative, its contrary?

Could we not then conclude that there is no moment in our life when we are in an efficient or adequate state in which to make an enquiry about the Absolute Reality, or God in Himself, precisely because it is necessary that we must either be in doubt or belief about Him? And it is this truth which our ancestors, the Hindu saints and philosophers, emphasized when they so definitely declared that nothing that anybody could ever say or think or feel about Him could reach the core of His being. After that complete exclusion of any conceivable enquiry, they insisted that the realization of the divine state by man took place as an inevitable event. Man, according to them, became absorbed in God, even though there was no sense in his making an effort to know about His nature. We, too, think that man is bound to undergo a terrific change at this supreme moment whenever it might fall due. He will cease to exist altogether as man, which is the same thing as saying that there is an end of the existence of relative God. In the place of man or the relative God, the Absolute God will appear. And this is clear, metaphysical truth and not a metaphor or an allegory. Man's career, which is the same thing as the career of relative God, comes to an end as a matter of course after the certainty and belief about the Absolute has arisen. Short of permanence and eternity which are meaningless prospects, certainty or belief about the Absolute Reality is the highest that man could reach; and in reaching that he necessarily paves the way for the re-appearance of the Absolute. And perhaps the point of what we are suggesting about God and man would be clearer if we added that man, after all, in his final state of belief or certainty is the culmination of what the God in relation to the Negative can become. In fact, unless we keep steadily in mind the fact that we are dealing with God all the time, whether we are dealing with Reality in itself or Reality in relation, that either the Absolute or the Relative God is always with us, in whatever state we might be, we shall not truly realize

the significance of the statement we have made about man. For man is nothing but a name, either for the God in relation to the Negative or the Negative in relation to God.

But all these extremely unusual suggestions will not be fully intelligible so long as we have not discussed the theory of Relative God. As a matter of fact, between God in Himself and God in relation, these two fundamental forms of Reality exhaust every conceivable form of existence. So that if man has to be found a place in existence, we have to identify him either with the one or the other. And as, evidently, God in Himself is beyond all enquiry, it is the Relative God alone who can make room for him in His capacious universe. The real issue, therefore, is—what is it that we mean by Relative God, or God in relation?

God in relation, or God in relation to His contrary, must be only another name for what we have described as the world of possibility. If the term "God" is to be taken as a synonym for Reality, it follows that God in relation can or must mean nothing but what Reality in relation actually means. In other words, the Relative God cannot but be Reality in opposition to or in harmony with its contrary, the Negative. So that if we have to use the term "God" for Reality, we may quite legitimately use the term "Satan" for the Negative; and the issue will take this form—what is the relation between God and Satan?

And yet we do not mean it as a sudden dramatic gesture in our description of the Relative God; our suggestion that Reality in relation to the Negative may be changed into God in relation to Satan has no spectacular insinuation. Our main and only point in that suggestion is that the idea of Relative God is exactly the same as that of Reality in relation to the Negative. The term "Satan," as a matter of course, appears to be a very suitable term to use for the Negative. We know of no other or better expression which can do for the Negative in its relation to God.

But it does not follow that the term "Satan" should be

used exactly as it was used by tradition, even as the term "God" will certainly not mean the same thing in this philosophy as it does in tradition. We have to alter the meaning of these terms on the ground that the objective reality which they were supposed to represent is not exactly what tradition took it to be. There is no reason why the same terms should not be used with different meanings if the difference is needed by virtue of a more accurate or adequate analysis of the subject-matter.

But what exactly do we mean by these two terms "God" and "Satan"? The best way of answering the question is to point out first that God and Satan, as they are both relative, must in the nature of things exist in two different relations, one after another. It is by discussing their relationship, to begin with, that we can get at the meaning of their nature and identity. And if we have to identify them with what we have described as the possibility of Being or the possibility of Nothing, it is clear that they will have to stand in a relation of conflict and opposition as well as in a relation of harmony and co-operation. And if we seek for evidence for this strange relationship between God and Satan it is to be found in our metaphysic, where we discussed the relation between the possibilities of Reality and Nothing. If we keep steadily in mind the fact that God and Satan stand absolutely for the two possibilities, and nothing else, it ought to be easy enough to see that they must behave exactly as the two possibilities are expected to behave. So that we may conclude with perfect justice that if, as a result of the conflict between them, both God and Satan are bound to be reduced to a state of confusion and doubt, the total achievement of their harmonious co-operation will amount to a belief and certainty about the Absolute Reality, or God in Himself.

And if this unusual view of the relation between God and Satan is taken for granted, the tradition that God and Satan can engage only in conflict or opposition between

them, or that either God or Satan is expected to come out victorious as a result of that deadly conflict, must be discarded as mistaken. It is inconceivable that God can exist only in a relation of conflict with Satan, and overthrow him or be liable to be overthrown by him. It is, on the contrary, definitely and firmly suggested by this philosophy that God and Satan must necessarily clash, just as much as they must equally firmly co-operate. And the necessary result of a conflict or clash between God and Satan is bound to be exactly the same as it is supposed to be between any pair of combatants, though less august and more accommodating. Relative Divinity will not escape confusion any more than Satan will, in spite of his proverbially high and mighty behaviour. Victory is a dream which would never materialize into reality even though God and Satan fought as hard as our human dictators pretend at times that they can. Equally true is it that neither God nor Satan could possibly miss the fulfilment which comes from a life or relation of harmony or co-operation between them which necessarily implies a common goal. And that fulfilment will mean for both of them the belief or certainty about God in Himself, or the Absolute Reality, as we have already said.

Two extremely serious conclusions follow from this strange analysis which seem to have a far-reaching effect on the traditional view:

(*a*) God and Satan are, without any doubt, placed on the same footing. God's omnipotence as a relative being is directly challenged. God in relation is not only deliberately made equal to Satan in strength and power, but he is made subject to confusion and illusion as well. Satan, on the other hand, against the most deeply rooted conviction of tradition, is raised in his position and dignity till he is made absolutely God's equal. Yet nothing worse than confusion or illusion is meted out to him in spite of his well-known Satanic behaviour.

(*b*) God and Satan are brought so close to one another that God is made dependent on Satan for all His achievement. The traditional distinction between God and Satan, which implied at least a hierarchy, is altogether obliterated.

The conclusions are far-reaching, and if they did not follow necessarily from the premises which we have established as indisputable truth, it would be very awkward indeed to uphold them. On the face of them they seem to be running mercilessly against the grain of most tradition. For how could we continue our traditional practice in dealing with Satan or approach God with prayer either for mercy or blessing, if God is not omnipotent and Satan is not evil? Should we not, on the contrary, have to disband the organized forces of the State and release all religious institutions from the authority and control of the long-standing priesthood?

And yet if, by a miracle, it so happens that the form and technique of our social institutions are actually modified in the light of our theory of equality between Satan and God, what could possibly be the total effect of that change?

Do we stand to lose or gain in all that we value firmly in life if our confidence in omnipotence is seriously shaken and the belief in evil is abandoned?

Would chances for human progress wither, and human life be reduced to a state of inaction and indifference as a prelude to disappearance, if there is no provision in our social scheme for the dictatorial or the morally supreme?

These are grave considerations, especially as we cannot for one moment forget the historic records which embody the exploits and sacrifices of those who cherished omnipotence and practised the cult of warfare or persuasion. It will be stupid to dismiss them as irresponsible or irrelevant.

But we cannot discuss the issue of this drastic change before we have discussed another issue which is equally serious.

And that issue is, whether the belief in omnipotence and incarnate evil is held to-day with the same conviction as that with which the human race held it even a few decades ago. Nobody need suggest that the leaders of human institutions, whether political, economic or religious, have pulled down the omnipotent heads and are practising a method of dealing with differences which is neither warlike nor persuasive. As we write these lines, we hear the distant rumbling in the clouds, the main seat of modern warfare. But it will be difficult to hold that even our Dictators, whose status or origin lies no further than the economic source, have real faith in the creed of omnipotence or evil, which their cult and practice so loudly proclaim. If omnipotence and evil are still the official creeds of the human race, the reason for that anomaly is that we have nothing better to uphold or profess. If we go to war or seek the method of persuasion still, in spite of the fact that centuries stand out in the history of the human race as a direct lie to their protension, we do so because we have nothing better to do. The truth is that in the interest of our welfare or human social order, we are prepared to abandon both the methods of dealing with differences if anything different can be found.

There has steadily grown in the course of long ages a sense of the failure of Omnipotent God to subdue and destroy the Incarnate Evil. The frequent and sustained wars that mankind fought on behalf of the Omnipotent God did not bear fruit, to our utter dismay or mortification. Privation, misery and misfortune never deserted the human home. As the poet said, the lurid glare of the red sun never left the horizon, or as the moralist put it, the forces of evil prevailed in the long run and human nature retained its satanic mould. Even the drastic faith that a God gave His life, if only to atone for the sins of the human race, did not diminish the chances of committing fresh sins. Law and order, the only achievement of man, never ceased to be the

subject for violation and spoliation. There was nothing stable or secure in anything that man ever built up to protect his life on earth.

There has been serious questioning in the heart of man about the omnipotence on which he staked his whole adventure of life. There is disillusionment about its claim and validity. There is even evident sign of nervousness lest the incarnate evil should prevail for good and all. Never before did man shake with such nervous dread or feel so helpless and feeble.

And yet, it does not seem that the ever-sustaining springs of hope dried up in the human heart. While man is in mortal dread that Satan may prevail and blast all chances for peace and happiness, there are signs that he is not in the mood for despair. Once God's omnipotence failed to carry out the divine intention, the chances for peace and happiness in the human home withered like corn in a drought. Without God's omnipotence man was but chaff in the wind. But Satan did not step into the omnipotent claim because God lost it. Man did not believe that Satan had power enough not only to rob the human home of peace and happiness, but to visit it with misfortune, misery and privation. If God failed to make peace and happiness stable features of the human home, Satan was equally bound to fail to realize his Satanic ambition, to make misery, misfortune and privation the stable feature of the human home.

For man himself, as his birthright, had the power and strength to frustrate Satan in his proverbial ambition to force man to submit to misery, privation, and misfortune. Man had the supreme power to take his life with his own hands instead of offering it as a sacrifice on the Satanic altar. It is a power which he can never lose as long as he survives as man; there is nothing to prevent him from mocking the powers of Satan. This is not a legend or poetic truth.

And it is this supreme confidence in his innate strength,

however fruitless, that fills him with hope and shuts out the mortal fear. If this confidence rules out the chance of Satanic omnipotence it recreates a faith in omnipotence. Man is bound to feel that if the divine loss of omnipotence was not followed by a Satanic gain of it there was nothing wrong with omnipotence as such. His deepest faith in omnipotence, without which nothing seemed to have any sense or claim, was bound to survive. And the question that man was bound to ask was, is the omnipotent then beyond God and Satan, to whom both God and Satan are subject, or is it that we have not known as yet what omnipotence truly meant, or what God and Satan truly were? To us, the mind of the modern man is filled with nothing so much as with this serious quest of rediscovering omnipotence or God or Satan. It is the supreme confidence of man in his innate strength to mock the powers of evil that stimulated this quest.

In very truth, man in his modern mood has neither the primitive taint of soulless despair nor the bluster of civilized arrogance. He is anxious and even nervous lest he may be placed at the mercy of the Evil One—the strain of a very hard life bears too heavily on him. His actions and moods, oftener than not, are uncertain and irresponsible. But he is essentially sound at heart and full of promise and hope. There is the prospect of re-birth and rejuvenation in his vision.

And it is this hope for a re-birth that made him take the supreme decision that he would no longer go through with privation, misery, and misfortune. To the modern man, the days of privation and misery are over; they are an anachronism in the modern age. There is no use for them. They are diabolical by their nature.

There was a time when man went through with them unflinchingly. There was an ostentatious display of his strength and determination to submit to sacrifice. Those were days of his immense faith in the omnipotence of God;

it was joy to man to bleed for his faith as it assured him stable peace and happiness. Human history is a standing witness to the fact that man suffered privation, misery, and misfortune as a matter of free choice and not submission to fate. He was assured that that was the only way to make peace and happiness stable and secure.

But as the faith in the omnipotent God withered under the strong glare of repeated failures to stabilize peace, the outlook gradually changed and modern man refused to go through with all that privation, misery, and misfortune. A protest steadily arose from the whole of mankind that suffering was not a discipline but the diabolic means of putting man in chains to Satan. It was the one sure way of frustrating the goal of his life. There was wide-spread awakening, the result of which was a clean spirit, which rebelled against the medieval code of life which made of even poverty a virtue. Gradually, the ascetic was relegated to legend and myth and from millions of full-throated voices the claims of equality and liberty arose. All this, at bottom, was nothing but a confession that mankind was wrong in believing in the omnipotence of God and in the incarnation of Evil.

Modern man, by all the signs on the horizon, is the sceptic without a flaw; he is intensely critical of the painful past but not seriously dubious about the future. The sustaining strength or light of vision is yet to dawn on him, though for all that he values his life is but a quest of that vision, an expectation of it. Even an artist or a poet, if he is deep enough, may well find in him a complicated theme. There is nervousness and dread lest one small moment of pure waste may ruin him for ever, though centuries of sacrifice did not shatter his nerves. There is clean and robust confession that the faith in omnipotent God or incarnate Evil was a blunder. And yet there never was such an assurance about omnipotence as in the modern man. If he is determined to break down the idols of the past, he is equally determined

to reclaim his religious life. Never before was man so deeply convinced about God.

It is a difficult and complicated theme but the key to it lies in its vivid claim for freshness and originality. The modern man is just an aspiration for a new God, a new discipline and a new technique. The theory of omnipotent God is gone for ever; so also the theory of suffering as value and the techniques of warfare and persuasion. And with them has gone the hold on the modern spirit of the institutions which professed omnipotent God and practised warfare and persuasion. The vast population of modern men and women can but be indifferent to them, though a few might still linger on the way to nurse the old illusion.

What then are the prospects that the equality between God and Satan is offering to such a spirit? Can this theory, whatever its strangeness, be fatal to the expectation of the modern man?

It is the one theory which to our mind appears to anticipate the fulfilment of man's aspiration to-day. It may or will, for certain, break down the forms and structures of ages, but such a nemesis was already foreshadowed by the steady drift in men's ideas and views. In truth, the structures are but the skeletons of bygone faiths and professions. They are like shadows which stand like screens to be removed, so that we may once again walk in the clear light of truth.

We shall proceed to deal with the three different issues:

(*a*) The new conception of Divinity.
(*b*) The new conception of Discipline.
(*c*) The new conception of Technique.

CHAPTER VII

TOTEMISM AND ANIMISM

Fresh analysis of the conceptions of Divinity and its contrary, the notion of satanic existence—specific features—theory of multiple Gods and Satans—relation to Totemism and Animism—relation to Polytheism and Monotheism—review of Polytheism and Monotheism—traditional conceptions untenable.

WE shall, to begin with, deal with the conception of Divinity and its contrary, the notion of Satanic existence.

We have already shown that God and Satan should be treated as absolutely equal—whether they are in conflict or harmony, they are expected to fare in exactly the same way. Neither of them is or can be supposed to be omnipotent, precisely because there is no such thing as omnipotence. Nor is either of them in any sense greater or smaller in strength or stature than the other. On the contrary, both have equally to function to realize ends, a necessity which is imposed on them by the sheer weight of existence. And both will necessarily have to meet with failure and achieve success in the course of their normal endeavour to realize ends.

And yet under no circumstances should their success or failure in realizing ends be taken to mean that they are deficient or efficient. To succeed in achieving one's purpose is no better or worse as an evidence of normal existence than to fail in realizing ends. Success or failure constitutes nothing but peculiarities in the mode of going through experience, which is another name for the simple or bare fact of living or existing. Anything existing, which is distinguishable from the non-existing, has to undergo both types or modes of experience. That is absolutely the *sine qua non* of existence, a privilege that goes with it to demarcate it from the literally dead or logically impossible.

It follows inevitably that to fail to realize an end cannot be the same thing as to suffer negation or to be liable to contradiction. If it is necessary that God and Satan must both fail in realizing ends, by virtue of the fact that they are existent entities and not fictions of the brain, their failure cannot be a sign that they had lost altogether the chances of recovery. The worst that failures can lead to or precipitate is illusion, or uncertainty. As a result of failure God and Satan are expected only to be reduced to a state of doubt and nothing worse nor less can happen. And as the state of doubt is not the same thing as the state of being negated or contradicted, recovery is bound to follow.

If God and Satan, again, have to fall into a state of doubt, that fact can only mean that they do as a matter of fact make efforts to realize ends which are bound to produce clash or conflict between them. It is only a proof that they are perfectly capable of cherishing ends which in the nature of things cannot be realized, that they are competent enough to make abortive attempts to realize the Absolute. If we are pleased to call this disagreeable phase of their life the commission of a blunder, we may; but it need not be supposed that it must also be called by the name of suicide. To exist is not necessarily to be proof against mistakes, precisely because mistakes as conceivable and actual occurrences are indispensable to existence. To exist is to be liable to commit mistakes and fall into illusions, just as much as it is to realize truths and be relieved from illusion.

Besides, if Reality and its contrary must exist in relationship, they must exist in relation of conflict, which means that the abortive attempt has to be made by both God and Satan with its consequent failure. If the relative state is indisputably necessary, the alternative to mistakes and blunders is a myth; and if we still try to visualize that alternative, it is certain that we shall fall into the trap of the orthodox omnipotence and the eternal infinite of tradition. There is no alternative to the conditions which breed

failure and provide for success. Both of them are essential to relative existence, and we can certainly cut them out of the plan of the universe if only we are prepared to cut out the whole universe.

But this failure would be truly serious if by any chance it proved fatal to the Absolute Reality or God in Himself and led to His absolute collapse. If the failure of relative God to revive or realize God in Himself meant that there was no chance for the Absolute God to come back to life, the "abortive attempt" or the mistaken mode of existence would have constituted an act of suicide and a case of genuine contradiction.

But such a collapse is beyond all possibility, precisely because the Negative in its absolute form is inconceivable. The Absolute Reality, or God in Himself, is bound to revive as there is no Negative to block the way or prevent His reappearance. And yet this inevitable revival follows precisely because the Absolute, as self-sufficient and unique, does not depend for its revival on the Relative in any sense whatever.

The issue that has now to be discussed is the specific features of God and Satan. We have to find out where in the world of possibility or the universe with which we deal they do appear, and in what precise forms.

The best way to make sure about their place in this universe and the exact forms that they are bound to assume in it would be to note that God and Satan are but terms that ought to be taken as synonyms for the already familiar expressions, Possibility of Reality and Possibility of Nothing. We may take it that every instance of the possibility of Reality is an instance of Relative Divinity. Similarly, an instance of Satanity if we may coin that term, will be found wherever there is an instance of the possibility of Nothing.

It follows that in all the multitudinous centres which constitute the universe, both God and Satan will necessarily appear. In other words, every individual centre will have

to function by turns both as God and Satan equally. If individuality truly means nothing but peculiarity or uniqueness, if its main and only function is to give rise to peculiarity in forms, every instance of it must admit of both individuation, Divine and Satanic. It is essential and inevitable that both God and Satan must appear not only in the forms of the inorganic, organic, cellular, and psychical, but also in each and every one of the multitudinous individual centres which represent these forms.

It will be perfectly correct to hold that every tree and stone will have as good a right to be called divine or satanic as any man or spirit or demigod. In so far as each and every one of them has to behave either as a possibility of Reality or as a possibility of Nothing, the claim to Divinity and Satanity accrues to them necessarily.

The immediate conclusion that follows is that we have to reckon with numerous gods and satans; in fact the universe will be full of nothing but gods and satans. And the humorist may well exclaim that at this rate, we may look forward to numerous divine and satanic formations, according to the taste and humour not only of the various human types but also of our animal, vegetable, and inorganic neighbours. The religious issue in consequence may well be unduly complicated, not only by the prospect of a sudden extension of the range of religious warfare, but also by the fact that a divine or satanic image, for instance, in the best taste of the cattle world, may stand like a riddle by the image which the human world has hitherto most painfully drawn. These are practical inconveniences with which the theologians may have to grapple, but it does not seem possible that one can escape such complications if we mean to be rigidly logical. If the birth of the Relative God has to be celebrated (we see no chance of escaping that celebration), it will be difficult to preserve the cult of the divine exclusively for the human fold or human pride.

And perhaps it may not be altogether mistaken to think

that while we fought our religious wars on the plane of the gods whom human minds revealed to this earth, we might have in that historic necessity fought for every type of god and satan. Neither side in a religious war cared to mince matters in its extremely honest though scrupulously hostile estimate of the gods of its rivals. The gods on both sides in consequence came to be classified sooner or later under the category of the evil one; their worth or value did not entitle them to the credit of any form or degree of Divinity, not even to the form of stone.

But if we can afford to forget the complication which the humorist may stress, there may be a different estimate of this dispersal of Divinity in what has been known as the totemic tradition of the human race. As far as we know, the domain and range of the totem extended to every part of the wide universe. Beginning from the star to the crocodile, every existent entity was requisitioned into service by the human race to serve as a god. And it will be a mistake to think that the man who worshipped the crocodile or the star was necessarily less earnest or happy than the man or woman who chose either a man as his God, or a voice in the wilderness, or a figure in the sky. It is difficult to be scrupulous and yet hold the view that a human being was better qualified to serve as Divinity than a well-shaped crocodile, provided we assume that Divinity meant something quite different from what the greatest of men or the longest of crocodiles ever could claim. No traditionalist can legitimately hold that there was or could be in any creature of earth, however high, even a spark of what made Divinity. If the creatures of the earth had still to be called divine, the line could not be drawn and the crocodiles left on the other side of the line as crocodiles, as a peculiar assortment of flesh and bones. It would be much more consistent to rope them all in (to use a dignified slang), and create a variegated pantheon which may suit not only the man-worshipper but the crocodile-worshipper too.

Perhaps that is what totem-worship was meant to achieve; it might have been based on a broad and realistic view of human history: it did not choose to be exclusive or arbitrary in its selection of divine expression. Perhaps the conviction behind this ultra-liberal motive was that if the universe chose to create a star or crocodile, it was only right that the divine and satanic motive should have been planted in the recess of their inner mould. We civilized human beings may prefer to keep that motive for what is called the higher reaches of creation, the civilized human being, but the universe has no temptation to draw a line.

And if we choose to follow the spirit of the universe rather than the high tension of human pride, it may be just as easy to find meaning and significance in what has been unnecessarily depreciated as animism, or nature-worship. It may not be so difficult to approach a star with the same regard and respect as we show to a man to whom we owe allegiance of some kind or other, provided we do not expect a return for all that we may offer to the star. The complication or difficulty about the star arises chiefly because the star, in spite of its brilliance and mystery, fails to communicate to us what even a child of the human race can. It is an elementary experience that the star does not talk to us nor touch us nor give us the feel of an embrace; nothing that we consider as countable in terms of economic gain seems to have ever reached us across the vast space that spreads between us. The star, therefore, to us soon appears to be meaningless brilliance, an object for poetic fancy or artistic emotion and by no means capable of holding in its bosom the divine spirit. We almost unconsciously fall into the belief that if stars have to be conceded claims to possess any spirit at all, let it be the spirit of our ancestors, so that we may sleep soundly in our bed at night, with the assurance that our ancestors are conscientiously guarding our interests on earth with the brilliance of stars.

But if we could shed this economic mode of testing the value and claim of things or beings, we might find some true significance in the mode or practices of nature-worship which civilized man chose to leave to their artists and poets —with what prospects to that worship, Heaven only knows. If we could take a broad view, a view based on the nature of the universe, and approach the star and the tree just as we approach human beings, it is certain that we should find that the agreements among them outweigh the differences. We have already discussed this issue in our metaphysic. We can only add that there is nothing wrong with either totem-worship or nature-worship, or even polytheism, which refuses to be satisfied with one God precisely because human tastes and needs which Gods are expected to satisfy vary so enormously. How could one single God serve so many human types, especially when they clash and refuse to accept one another as members of civilization or what is called primitive barbarism? This is not wholly an idle question to raise.

Yet it need not be taken for granted that the issue about Divinity is really so elementary as apparently our plea on behalf of polytheism makes it out to be. We have no doubt whatever that there is a perfectly legitimate case for the polytheistic faith but we do not mean that the issue about Divinity is nothing if not polytheism in disguise. Even if it has to be granted that the belief that there are many Gods is sound, the divine claim in its strict fulfilment need not be satisfied by that concession alone. The monotheistic claim, which is the direct opposite of the polytheistic, has to be equally satisfied before the divine claim is fully met. It is necessary that we should discuss both polytheism and monotheism at much greater length.

Those who put the case for Polytheism meant honestly to be exclusive, and in their scheme for divine satisfaction there was no provision for the monotheistic ambition. The polytheistic seekers of Divinity were convinced that the

universe, strictly speaking, contained many Gods rather than one. Divinity to them was a strictly pluralistic entity. And they held this view conscientiously as a challenge to the monotheistic position that God, by nature, is one or that there was only one God.

Curiously, the emphasis in this challenge was put on the fact of negation alone, that God was not one, and so there seemed to have been no occasion for the polytheist to enquire what exactly the number of Gods might be. No polytheist, as far as we know, did ever actually count the number of Gods in the universe; they only cited cases or instances of Divinity to disprove the claim that God was one. Whether the polytheist could utilize the celebrated picture of "the rain of atoms" as a divine symbol to suggest a possible limit is an interesting point. But the question of fixing the number of Gods in all conscience must be a baffling one.

The reason, however, why the polytheist held to the view that Divinity could exist only in a pluralistic form was mainly empirical, realistic and historical. In so far as human history held cases of different groups of men and women worshipping different Gods, the polytheistic conclusion was inevitable. If there were many and different types of human species, it was only natural that there should be many and different types of Divinity to suit their peculiar needs or singular aspirations. This is a frank and straightforward position.

And in this perfectly normal and realistic conclusion the polytheists, it seems, were very generously supported by a very ancient tradition of prophethood. That tradition came down from the ancient Hindus who held with firmness that God graciously visited this earth periodically for the protection of the saintly and for the welfare of humanity, and that in the guise of Prophet. Each age has its own Prophet, or God's revelation in the Hindu sense of the term, precisely because each age has its saints and its humanity in need of protection.

The tradition, whatever its true significance, had apparently a polytheistic inclination. If Divinity has to change periodically its form, in the guise of prophethood, according to the need of historic times, it should be difficult for it to preserve a strictly monotheistic possibility. Its oneness or strict singularity is bound to be neutralized.

But does this confirmation by the Hindu tradition truly help polytheism to establish its absolute claim against monotheism? Even if we have to assume that there are as many Gods as there are ages, climes and races, does it necessarily follow that Divinity must mean, if anything, an exclusively pluralistic existence? Is it necessary to hold that there can be no sense in the monotheistic claim that God is one, simply because we have to recognize different groups which have to profess different Gods instead of the same identical Divinity?

It is not possible that we can decide the issue unless and until we have discussed not only the empirical evidence on which polytheism mainly stands, but also its clear logical implications. We have to keep in mind that the polytheist necessarily has to refer to a definite metaphysical position as the ground of his historical claim, whether he makes it a part of his evidence or not. It is necessary that while we should find out what exactly is meant by the claim that human society exists in the form of different groups which profess and worship different Gods, we should discuss also whether the pluralistic conception of the universe which it implies stands to reason.

We shall deal with the empirical evidence to begin with.

It may be granted at once that in some sense or other human society does appear to exist in different groups which profess different Gods and it is well known that the Gods which these groups professed varied both in number and quality. If the issue is one of multiplicity alone, it is inconceivable how it can be disputed or denied as matter of fact. It will be altogether false to suggest that our universe

whether we take it in its comprehensive feature or look at it from a restricted and specific angle, has no room for multiplicity. Whether we deal with individual centres or groups of them as constituents of the universe, multiplicity must appear as an inevitable feature of it.

If polytheism, or pluralism (which is its metaphysical principle) meant to refer to nothing but this multiple character of the universe and the groups which constituted it, its claim would stand as indisputable. The monotheist could produce no case against the polytheist if the main point of his attack was directed to the multiple feature of the universe in the shape of individuals or groups.

But the claim of polytheism does not rest on the recognition of multiplicity as such but on the assumption that the multiple centres are independent and unique without any relation to bind them together. When the polytheist talks about many Gods and the many groups which profess them, he does mean that the Gods have nothing to do with each other. They are truly Olympic beings. One cannot form even a pantheon with them, as, strictly speaking, one cannot trace them to a common stock or impose upon them a relationship of levels and grades. The true polytheistic claim should be supposed to stand for the immaculate purity and supreme independence of each God. The position in its radical form was interested in preserving Divinity in every instance of Gods, which meant absolute self-sufficiency, a strictly exclusive trait of Divinity. If multiplicity has to be recognized as fact, and if Divinity has to be attached to each and every centre, all relationships which mean subordination of some kind or other have to be discarded.

The issue, therefore, arises, can polytheism consistently hold that multiplicity, even though it may be indisputable as a fact, can afford to be non-relational or disown complicity with relationship altogether? And if it appears that relationship is just as indisputable a fact as multiplicity,

can polytheism escape the claim of monotheism which is bound to arise from the nature of relationship?

So far as history goes there have been two metaphysical positions which stressed the monistic and pluralistic character or feature of Reality. One may quite justly take them as the logical or metaphysical parallels of monotheism and polytheism which viewed Reality in terms of Divinity. That God is one or God is many is only the religious way of claiming that Reality is one and monistic, and that Reality is many and pluralistic.

The prospects of both polytheism and monotheism, therefore, if we do not go any deeper into their peculiar historic development, may be tied up with the same difficulties as that with which the prospects of monism and pluralism were tied up. Logically speaking, it is difficult to believe that the polytheist has any evidence in its favour which is not exactly of the same strength as that of the monotheist. It should be easy and possible to make as good a case in favour of or against the one as in favour of or against the other. We have already discussed the logical feature in our analysis of monism and pluralism. We have no illusions as to either claim—Reality is monistic and singular or Reality is pluralistic and many.

It might be interesting, however, to trace the genesis of polytheism and monotheism as a matter of historical evolution, if only to see how the monistic and pluralistic claims came to be actually held in connection with the notion of Divinity.

We have already seen that the polytheistic claim arose on the ground of the empirical fact that human society did actually profess many Gods instead of one. The polytheist was perfectly justified in claiming that it was quite wrong to hold that the human race knew of only one God. Equally justified was he in claiming that the groups which professed these different Gods were quite unique and peculiar. The case of many Gods as a historical fact was unanswerable.

How then did the conception of one God arise? Why was it claimed by others in the teeth of the historical fact of many Gods that God was one and not many?

The claim arose from the fact that the many Gods were found by those who disapproved or opposed the polytheistic position to be in a state of relationship which was bound to give rise to the monotheistic conception. The monotheists claimed that though human society existed as a matter of fact in multiple groups and professed accordingly many Gods, these groups or Gods were not all equally real and true groups or Gods. On the contrary, only one of these groups or Gods could be legitimately claimed to be genuine or truly human or divine.

In other words, while multiplicity was cheerfully accepted as a fact it was not recognized as a type of fact which had an absolute right to survive. It was claimed that in the nature of things multiplicity, whether in the form of groups or Gods, was bound to end in simplicity and singularity.

And as far as history goes, two definite processes were suggested by which this wholesome and rational result could be easily brought about. The processes are: (*a*) the method of warfare; (*b*) the method of persuasion. The idea was that these multiple groups stood either as a series of degrees or grades of truth and value or in two marked divisions, one of which represented truth while the other represented falsehood.

And if we for a moment revert to our account of the Revelationist and the Absorptionist, it should not be difficult for us to associate the two types of process with these two different positions respectively. In fact, both the Revelationist and the Absorptionist were monotheistic, though not exactly in the same identical sense. Both of them held definitely that the groups of society, or the Gods whom they professed, were not all equally real or genuine. Only one among these groups or Gods was truly genuine and real and had a right to survive. In consequence, while the

Revelationist held that the true God was in a relation of conflict with the rest of the so-called Gods, the Absorptionist held that the true God was in a relation of grades to the rest of the Gods. In both cases, an attempt was made to reduce the multiple Gods to the true God, or the perfect God, on the ground that truth should eliminate falsehood, or that the less complete should be assimilated by the more complete. The result in the long run was expected to be the survival of one group or one God and the disappearance of the multiple groups or Gods.

But our account of monotheism, whatever its historic significance, may not be taken as altogether accurate or exhaustive. We have at least to take account of the well-known monotheistic position which stands on the declaration that God must be one precisely because He is unlimited. In fact, many will assert (with the clear support of a strong historical position) that monotheism has no meaning apart from the fact that God alone is unlimited, all-perfect, and eternal. We might be reminded that it was not for nothing that the most vigorous monotheistic movement of history deliberately eschewed the claim of Divinity for a historical person and called him the Prophet of God. "God is one," "there is but one God," is the daily repeated monotheistic claim of at least millions of human beings, and the claim does not mean anything more than the emphasis on the unlimited and absolute character of God alone. Its historic clash with image-worship alone, with its disastrous consequences, will bear out the point we are emphasizing.

There can be no question of disputing the unlimited character of God as an article of faith among all those who believed in Divinity. Whether it was individuals or groups of them who professed monotheism or polytheism, they all must have unhesitatingly subscribed to that fundamental article of faith. There is no point in preserving the notion of Divinity if the quality or predicate of being unlimited is not preserved at the same moment. There can be no occasion

for professing many Gods or one God unless one had already professed or admitted the possibility of being unlimited on behalf of some one being or other.

But the moment one subscribed to this article of faith which suggests an unlimited Being, it would become imperative to draw a line between that Being and all those mortals who were not unlimited and might be human or animal or vegetable or even inorganic. The fact is that it was only because one had to believe in both the limited and unlimited that one believed in either of them. There was no question of confusing them; there could be only a momentary whim to deny either the one or the other. Human history will bear testimony to all these truths however strange they may sound.

But what exactly is the issue between polytheism and monotheism? Do they differ as to the quality of Godhead, or about its simple numerical feature?

It seems to be evident that both the polytheist and the monotheist must necessarily accept the fact of Divinity. There can be no question of either of them disputing the validity of the notion of Divinity or the truth of the existence of God. Could they have disagreed on the question of Divinity so definitely if they had not both equally assumed the existence of God?

And what is meant by accepting the existence of Divinity unless it is to believe that there is such a thing as unlimited and eternal existence?

Both the polytheist and the monotheist, it has to be supposed, must have professed complete faith in unlimited God if there was any legitimate ground of contention behind their historic controversy. The issue between them could not possibly have turned on the possibility of an unlimited God. They could not have been normally disputing the unlimited nature of Divinity. The polytheist of history is a very different person from the sceptic, the empiricist, or the atheist of the same tradition.

What, then, is the true significance of the repeated claim that God is one—there is but one God, if this frankly monotheistic assertion is not to be confused with the simple suggestion that God is unlimited? If the polytheist need not be assured that there is God who is unlimited and eternal, what is it intended to convey to him?

What feature of Divinity, then, if it was not the unlimited and eternal feature, was the monotheistic claim calculated or intended to emphasize?

If we go by history, the issue between monotheism which declared that God is one, there is but one God, and every other theistic belief or movement with which it clashed, turned not on the claim that God is unlimited but on the emphatic assertion that the historical person who declared the monotheistic claim must be taken as God's only Prophet or Son.

What we have specially to note with regard to the historic type of monotheism is that it laid down not one but two distinct statements in connection with Divinity:

(*a*) That God is unlimited, that God is one, there is but one God.
(*b*) That the historical person who delivered this statement as a result of a revelation to him from God was God's only Prophet or Son.

It will be neither accurate nor in any sense desirable to suggest that the claim to the unlimited character of Divinity formed the bone of contention between this type and all other types. The claim in question was the only criterion by which Divinity could be judged. Except the atheist, sceptic, or the rigid empiricist, no group of men could possibly find any reason to join issue with it.

But it was certainly another matter to accept the testimony of the historical person who happened to repeat an ancient truth once again, on the ground that he was the Prophet or Son of God. And a good portion of the painful history

of the human race inevitably arose from the fact that the largest section of the human race did not or could not see their way to accept it.

And if the difficulty of acceptance inevitably arose, it did so on the simple ground that the testimony of the historical person could not be accepted unless and until the historical person whose testimony was in consideration was either divine or quasi-divine. If, in other words, one could assume with perfect reason that that historical person was absolute in his authority and indisputable in his judgement, there could have been no reason to disbelieve his testimony.

But to accept his authority as absolute was to assume that a historical person could be divine or quasi-divine, precisely because absoluteness is a feature of the unlimited and divine, and not certainly of the limited and historical. And if by any chance we do feel it necessary to make that assumption we are sure to land ourselves in the cockpit of the controversy which raged between the polytheists and the monotheists. For nothing can so inevitably precipitate the fateful contingency—the possibility of the claim to Divinity or quasi-Divinity arising in multiple centres—as this momentous assumption.

For, once you choose to bring down Divinity or quasi-Divinity to the limited span of history where limitation is universally supposed to rule, you are bound to scatter it sooner or later among the multiple claimants who constitute that history.

And after that the alternatives are bound to appear in the shape of either polytheism, which would stand for every centre where the divine or quasi-divine claim arose, or monotheism, which would make a resolute effort to oppose that claim in the sole interest of one of those centres. There is no third course open or conceivable, and the history of religious faiths, for inscrutable reasons, took exactly this painful course. Both polytheism and monotheism arose on the basis of the historical claims made on behalf of historical

persons or races or groups. And as luck would have it, the course of history has not changed very considerably since that fateful choice.

Indeed there is hardly any reason to suggest that monotheism meant nothing but a claim for the unlimited character of God, as if the polytheist was an atheist or sceptic or rigid empiricist. Whether we take it in the form which stood for Prophethood, or for Sonship of God, we have to note that its chief point was to emphasize the divine or quasi-divine character of a historical person who by definition was limited and non-divine. The issue was not whether God was unlimited or eternal, the issue was whether the historical person in question was divine or quasi-divine. When it was honestly and frankly held that "God was one, there was but one God," what was meant was that there was only one Son of God or one Prophet of God. The numerical emphasis fell on the Son of God or Prophet of God and not on God. To follow its true significance, one has to note the two clearly distinct meanings of the statement—"God is one, there is but one God":

(*a*) It meant that God is unlimited and eternal because He is one.

(*b*) It meant that the son or prophet must be one, as they are divine and unlimited.

There was no issue about the first meaning, for both the Polytheist and the Monotheist had to admit that God was unlimited and eternal. And it may be argued that if the issue had by any chance arisen about the Absolute God, there would have been no hesitation on the part of the polytheist to declare that the Almighty God who was eternal and absolute must be necessarily one.

The issue about the numerical character or feature of Divinity did not arise with regard to the mystical and transcendental God. It arose about the historical claimants to Divinity or quasi-Divinity. And there the polytheist was

adamant that God was many exactly as the monotheist was adamant that God was one.

And yet to follow strictly the origin of the ancient controversy between the polytheist and the monotheist it is necessary that we should keep in mind that both sides not only made a distinction between the divine and the non-divine, the transcendental and phenomenal, the unlimited and limited, but definitely held that the historical did become the mystical. It is this assumption which really was at the bottom of the whole controversy.

And it is too late in the day to argue that the theory of prophethood and sonship was not infected by this anomalous assumption. Both of them scrupulously claimed for the prophet or the son the divine feature of authority and indisputable veracity. If honest and deliberate effort was still to preserve on behalf of them a spirit of humility and an anxiety for the service of humanity, it was the result of an afterthought, or a confusion of mind. For humility and service, which are but human virtues, cease altogether to have a meaning in the *milieu* of absoluteness, whether in authority or judgement. We cannot legitimately attribute any of the human virtues to the prophet or son if we have already claimed for them divine attributes. We may play with the notion that they are quasi-divine but that is only an evidence of the limitation of human behaviour.

Incidentally it may be noticed that exactly the same situation arose in the case of the Absorptionist who, too, professed monotheism like the Revelationist. There is a considerable difference no doubt between the two types of monotheism. The Absorptionist did not believe that the historical sphere ever had a direct message from or contact with Divinity. It was scrupulous enough to preserve the distinction between the divine and human. God, therefore, was neither one nor many and there could be no occasion for discussing whether there were many Gods. Monotheism here strictly meant that God is unlimited and eternal. There

could be nothing else and no other Being to contest or dispute His claim and sovereignty. That is the meaning of this type of monotheism.

But the term God came to have another significance in connection with the worship of the various human groups. A distinction was made by this school of thought between the religious and the spiritual life of man. While the spiritual life was understood to mean the life of absorption in the Absolute God, religious life was understood in the sense of worshipping different images and concepts. If we keep in mind the fact that the Absorptionist accepted the historical world as only a world of preparation for the human race, we shall easily see the distinction between the Absolute God and the images of Divinity.

And it is with regard to these images of Divinity that the whole difficulty about polytheism and monotheism arose in the school of the Absorptionist. For however the Absorptionist might have taken care to distinguish between Divinity and the image of Divinity, it was not possible for him to escape the issue whether the multiple images, beginning from stocks and stones up to the Absolute or Param Brahma, should be polytheistically or monotheistically considered.

It is history which anybody can verify that a gradation was made of these images on the basis of degrees of truth. Though they were all images of Divinity, they were by no means equally complete and true. The Absorptionist held definitely that the image on the lowest level has to be lifted up to the image on the highest level. So that the polytheistic claim that all the images were equally true and unique came to be flatly rebutted by the monotheistic position that only one of these images was complete and perfect.

And it is no good trying to minimize the gravity or seriousness of this controversy on the ground that they were all mere images of Divinity about which the controversy arose. For, so far as the historical plane is concerned, it is the Image that constitutes the soul of worship which is the

highest phase of human life. The Absolute God who does not come into the historical sphere could be reached only after the highest image of Divinity had been conceived and contemplated. The "Image" in the one case did exactly the same service as the Son and the Prophet did in the other.

The issue between the polytheist and the monotheist, therefore, was altogether a historical issue. There is no reason whatsoever to confuse it with the issue between the unlimited and limited. What has to be kept in mind with regard to this controversy is that both the polytheist and the monotheist somehow believed that the divine attribute, absolute authority, and indisputable veracity, can be historically materialized. And so the question arose whether any one particular centre or group or individual should be credited with it or all centres and groups, unrestrictedly. The monotheist found it difficult to believe that the multiple centres could all equally claim to be absolute and indisputable since the multiple stood in a relation of part and whole or as contradictories. They had to be reduced to simplicity. The polytheist, on the contrary, stood for uniqueness, independence, and freedom. The whole situation remains to-day exactly where it began centuries ago. It is inconceivable that one could make a case for either polytheism or monotheism either on historical or logical grounds. Logically, the monistic and pluralistic positions are incompatible. Historically, both monotheism and polytheism have survived equally through centuries.

And it was perfectly natural that they should have done so: for once the main assumption was granted, the possibility of the unlimited becoming historical and limited, it became practically immaterial whether the limitation should have taken place in one particular form or more than one form. The real difficulty did not appear with regard to the dispersal of Divinity or deliberate concentration of it in one particular centre. It appeared in the basal assumption that the unlimited divine could become limited or quasi-human

or divine. And in so far as none of the monotheistic schools had scrupled to violate the law of consistency, they were at the mercy of the polytheist, whose main contention was that the revelation took place in multiple centres.

The polytheist was perfectly justified in claiming that if it was necessary that the limitation must take place its course should not be confined to one particular centre or age or clime. If the unlimited God has to be brought down to this earth by some curious manipulation of his unlimited capacity, why should only a portion or section of that earth enjoy the fruit of that transformation? Once grant that the unlimited can become limited, that the innate incompatibility between the unlimited and the limited may be transcended, could there be any reason to make that inconceivable transmutation unduly scrupulous in its range and comprehension? On the contrary, the polytheist might reasonably argue that if the unlimited had to become limited, it was bound to take the form of multiplicity, precisely because the limited was multiple by its nature. This might be suggested as the strongest argument on the side of the polytheist, and we suggest it on his behalf, whether it is historically verified or not.

The issue between the polytheist and the monotheist, as it was directly connected with the assumption of revelation and the transmutation of the unlimited into the limited, had really no logical or metaphysical value. Its chief importance lay in its historical setting, and that setting covered a good portion of human history to the utter shame and discredit of the human race.

CHAPTER VIII

POLYTHEISM AND MONOTHEISM

Further analysis of Polytheism and Monotheism—a fresh view has to be suggested—theory of relationship among multiple Gods and Satans—the statement of our notion of relationship—conflict and harmony leading up to unity—the stage of conflict is still prevailing—God and Satan have been so far only in opposition or conflict—evidence from the nature of the conflicting categories.

If both monotheism and polytheism as we have so far cherished them have to be discarded as mistaken conceptions of Divinity, have we to discard them as altogether mistaken? If the claims that God is one or God is many cannot be approved on the grounds so far suggested, does it follow that they cannot be supported by evidence or arguments at all? It may be that the Monotheist and the Polytheist were both wrong in claiming that the unlimited God became historical and limited, or that their supreme transformation took place either in one centre or in multiple centres. But does that mean that fundamentally and essentially the views were wrong? May it not be possible to make a case either in favour of monotheism or of polytheism or of both?

We hold definitely that a case can be made for both. It should be possible to hold that God is one and at the same time to profess that there are many Gods. If difficulty arose about both of them, it arose for reasons which had no direct bearing upon the numerical feature of Divinity.

But as these two conceptions were derived by tradition from the universal belief that Divinity was unlimited, it was inevitable that they would clash, either as contradictories or incompatibles. It is the inaccurate conception of Divinity that was at bottom responsible for the clash and conflict between the polytheist and the monotheist

of tradition. It might be safely argued that tradition did not know what Divinity truly meant any more than it knew what polytheism and monotheism stood for. The two misconceptions of tradition about Divinity and about its numerical feature were intimately bound up.

It is necessary, therefore, that we should explain the origin of the traditional views of polytheism and monotheism before we proceed to discuss them in the light of our own philosophy. Our point is to explain how the universal belief that God is unlimited was bound to lead in the end to the formulation of the monotheistic and polytheistic claims in a relation of sharp contrariety.

To begin with, if God is unlimited and eternal, it is difficult to see how we can avoid the monotheistic conception of Divinity. It is common sense to see that the unlimited God, if He is there at all, must be monistic. There can be nothing else that can truly cast a shadow on His eternity or absoluteness.

At the same time, if the limited and finite has to be recognized by the side of the unlimited, it is difficult to see how one could escape the polytheistic conception of Divinity either. Let us explain.

The issue whether God is one or many was not raised by God Himself, if we follow the history of religious experience. That issue evidently was raised by the polytheist or the monotheist, who after all were neither divine nor quasi-divine, but honestly limited beings. And if they raised the question whether God is one or many the reason evidently was that they were not quite satisfied with their limited condition of life. They had far too deep a sense of the value of the unlimited life to be content with their limited existence which, to them, was a sign of deficiency and feebleness. Both the Polytheist and the Monotheist, normally speaking, must have been anxious to improve their prospects by discovering a means by which the limited could emulate or symbolize or impersonate the unlimited. While both of them could not but have noticed the sharp cleavage between the

unlimited and limited states of existence, it was not inconceivable that they would actually believe that the limited could somehow or other become the unlimited. In fact relationship between the unlimited and limited, in spite of the fact that they appeared to be strictly incompatibles, had to be believed in.

As sensible men, the polytheist and the monotheist could not possibly rest content with the prospects of an existence which was not only deficient and feeble but also supposed to be mere illusion and myth.

What happened then was the honest and vigorous profession of the terrific claim that the limited could be unlimited, that man could be divine. In this claim both the polytheist and the monotheist must have equally and wholeheartedly joined. And as regards the mode of transformation, revelation, whether it was direct or indirect, must have been taken as its only suitable medium. Both the polytheist and the monotheist must be supposed to have believed in revelation equally.

But after that unanimity or agreement between them a deep disagreement appeared. The monotheist came to hold that though the limited can be unlimited, it was only a particular form of the limited that could be unlimited. On the other hand, the polytheist held that if the unlimited could be limited, there was no reason why all the multiple centres without exception should not be unlimited. Both accepted the limited world and also believed that it was constituted by multiple centres. But while the monotheist came to believe that only one of these multiple centres could claim to be unlimited, the polytheist made no such distinction and claimed for each and every centre the capacity or right of being unlimited.

And yet, if a reason has to be found for this strange disagreement in the valuation of the multiple constituents of the limited universe, one may suggest that while the monotheist could never forget that the unlimited could but be

one, the polytheist always remembered that the limited world was a fact, which meant that its multiple constituents had equal value. As, to the monotheist, the unlimited had no meaning apart from its monistic feature, to the polytheist, the limited had no meaning apart from its pluralistic character.

Both views, as we have shown, are mistaken; God is not one, in the sense in which the monotheist understood God; nor is He many in the sense in which the polytheist understood God. But God is one as well as many. Let us explain.

We have shown already that Divinity has two forms, Absolute and Relative—God in Himself and God in relation. We have also shown that God in relation, or God in His relative form, appears inevitably in a relation of absolute equality with Satan. God and Satan have to appear not only in conflict and harmony but as absolutely equal, whether as opposities or complementaries. Further, as we have also pointed out, as relative existents or entities, God and Satan are equally bound to exist in multitudinous forms as constituents of the relative universe, or the realm of possibility.

The question now is, if the universe is bound to have multiple Gods and Satans what precisely is the relationship among these multiple Gods and Satans. We have to repeat our theory of relationship.

Relationship to us means very much more than what it actually meant for tradition. Not only do we hold a different view of relationship as such—relation, to us, does not relate terms—but we believe also that relation has three distinct forms: (*a*) similarity, (*b*) conflict, (*c*) dissimilarity or harmony.

Whether tradition got hold of all these forms is not exactly the point we should be discussing now. But it may be mentioned that tradition did not get the right idea of similarity, and perhaps not of harmony either. The terms

"similarity" and "harmony" were by no means unfamiliar terms in tradition, and it will be a clear mistake if we suggest that tradition did not attach definite meanings to these terms. But we do not mean by "similarity," "identity in difference," as tradition did. We have discussed at length the illegitimacy of the notion of concept on which the relation of similarity stands. Our notion of similarity is entirely different: we need not repeat it again.

Again it is difficult to believe that tradition did understand truly what we should mean by harmony. The idea of an organic whole, for one thing, was known to it, so that the notion of common purpose could not have been altogether unfamiliar to it. But it may not be true that tradition knew that harmony implied absence of conflict—that it could not coincide with conflict. Perhaps tradition confused harmony with the cases in which conflict is in abeyance for a while, and some sort of positive achievement takes place by joint activities on the part of different centres professing a common goal. These cases are facts of history but it will be a mistake to call them by the name of harmony.

And perhaps the same kind of deficiency might have to be pointed out with regard to its notion of conflict. Nobody need even in a dream forget that by far the largest portion of tradition was spent in nursing the grievances of conflict, if we can talk in that familiar way. While we have talked incessantly about harmony as an ideal goal, we energetically studied and dealt with conflict most of the time as stern facts. Our devices and ingenuities all centred in our honest efforts to bring the conflicts in human existence to some sort of an end. If we can truly claim to have achieved anything which is unusual, the evidence for that claim will be found in steady evolution in the weapons of fighting and in ingenious methods of persuading the enemy. Human civilization has so far meant nothing but a specialization in these two arts, with what result we know but too well. And it need not be an exaggeration to say that what has

been taken as pure art and religious faith was nothing if not an aid to sustain us in our incessant attempt to fight the enemy or to win him over by persuasion.

And yet it may be difficult to say that tradition did understand the true nature of conflict with any degree of adequacy. It may be almost true that it did not know that conflict meant a relation of contrariety and not contradiction or degrees. It is difficult to believe that it would have wasted all its energy on the methods of warfare and persuasion in dealing with conflict if it had truly realized that conflict was a relation of contrariety. Besides, it never brought any conflict to a close.

We hold that conflict is a relation of contrariety and not contradiction or degree. We hold too that the methods of warfare and persuasion can only create or evolve conflict rather than bring conflicts to an end. It is not a fact (we make no apology for saying so) that warfare or persuasion ever brought any conflict to an end. We can cheerfully and conscientiously cultivate them if it is necessary that we should cultivate conflicts instead of bringing them to an end.

And yet it need not be a matter for complaint that conflicts, instead of being ended or closed, had been steadily cultivated, perhaps since the beginning of creation. He must be a bold man indeed who would repudiate without any qualm of conscience such a robust tradition of the human race—how much do we know about the secret of the universe? And perhaps it may be possible to find meaning or significance in such a scrupulously continuous history, however we may condemn it as almost a waste. We shall soon see.

But it does not follow that tradition never had any idea or knowledge of contrariety. We have already discussed what tradition meant by incompatibility or opposites. In fact, the initial stages in this constructive scheme took account of the traditional practice of associating the idea

of incompatibility with the Law of Contradiction. And we may be forgiven if we allude once again to the dear old Ass of Buridan, who behaved like a true martyr to persuade the ecclesiastical world to believe in the creed of contrariety.

But it is not true that tradition made anything of this idea of contrariety. It did not, by any chance, approach the major and serious instances of conflict with this notion in view. Nor did it draw the right conclusion either about warfare and persuasion or about the true method of ending a conflict, although the methods of warfare and persuasion time after time reduced the competing sides in conflict to a condition where they were equally powerless to achieve their ends.

And yet these comments may appear to be fantasic to many who still strongly uphold the credal faiths or mystical claims. We make them frankly and feel confident that they are sound. The evidence will appear as we go on.

In the meantime, we may conclude this review of the notion of relationship by repeating that tradition missed the true and adequate notion of not only similarity but also of harmony and conflict.

And the question that we shall proceed to discuss is, what becomes of Divinity if we are to believe that the multiple forms of it must stand in a relation of similarity, conflict, and harmony?

We have to go back to our idea of the universe, or the realm of possibility, for it is in that universe alone that the multiple forms of Divinity appear.

Two things about the universe have to be specially kept in mind if we are to find out how exactly the divine forms will appear in it:

(*a*) That the universe begins with multiple forms which are divided into two types—Possibility of Being, Possibility of Nothing.

(*b*) That these two types in multiple forms exist as two series of "similars."

The universe that we have to visualize for the purpose of locating the multiple forms of Divinity in it is the universe of similars. The multiple instances are unique and independent but not unrelated, and if they are related as multiple instances, the relationship is not one of conflict and harmony. If we want to visualize the multiple instances as such, we have to note that they stand as similars. The relation of similarity, as we have already pointed out, is the relation *par excellence* of multiplicity. Here is a distinct relationship which tradition did not take into consideration. It is the *sine qua non* of multiple existence. Multiple existence is not possible without it.

If the relation of similarity were inconceivable, multiplicity would have been inconceivable. There would have been no realm of possibility, or the relative world, and Reality would have disastrously collapsed into the arms of the Negative.

But the similars cannot possibly come into existence unless they are strictly related by conflict. The universe in its primal stage has to be in a state of conflict, which means that the universe of similars must begin in the form of two series of similars in a state of conflict or opposition. We cannot go back any further as there can be nothing beyond, and we have to start from this primal state.

Two issues, therefore, have to be considered:

(*a*) What does conflict imply? What are the conditions of conflict?
(*b*) How would the multiple forms of Divinity appear in this primal universe?

As regards conflict, we know already that the centres in a state of conflict represent nothing but the possibility of Being and the possibility of Nothing. And they represent them in the sense that each of them would function literally as both the possibilities and that by turns. We have seen also that exactly the same truth could be expressed by

saying that each of them would function as God and Satan alternately.

One would expect naturally to come across as many Gods and Satans as there are centres or multiple similars. The two series to which we have just referred will have to function as God and Satan equally by turns.

And conflict, again, as we have also seen, is not possible without a background; in other words, God and Satan, if they have to clash, must clash about something. The clash between them is bound to be impossible if they were actually absolute differents. God's function, therefore, will normally consist in trying to defend or perpetuate that "something," while Satan's function will be to destroy it, as God and Satan represented the possibility of Being or the possibility of Nothing respectively.

It follows equally that there is bound to be more than one clash or conflict between God and Satan, in fact there must be two distinct clashes in succession. As each centre will stage a clash, it will have to stage it as God and Satan in succession. There must therefore be two backgrounds to the two conflicts, and the question then will arise, could we discover what they might be?

We have described already how the subject-matter of all conflicts must be a life of unity which was past and could not be coincident with the conflict. Our suggestion was that the life of unity to which a relation of harmony is expected to give rise, forms the subject-matter of conflict later on, by which process it comes into relation with its contrary.

But as the primal condition of the universe cannot be expected to have a previous existence, the life of unity with which the primal conflict has to start must be an implication. It could exist only as an image or concept or what corresponds to them.

If God and Satan have to start conflicts in multiple centres they have to start them with a definite image or concept of

a life of unity, and as the conflict was bound to be dual in character, the images and concepts representing the life of unity must be dual too.

Two conclusions follow from this which have a bearing upon the theories of primal beginning:

(*a*) It shows that the original beginning was not homogeneous or nebulous.
(*b*) It shows also that the pattern and structure of the universe began in its complete form right from the beginning.

The pattern is multiple centres existing as similars in a relation of conflict, which implied a definite image and referred to a life of unity. There is nothing homogeneous or nebulous about it.

And this form or pattern it may be added was never lost or modified by any instance of conflict. The changes that took place appeared in what tradition described as the content of that pattern.

Could we now discover the nature of the two images which formed the subject-matter of primal conflict?

It seems likely that the existing condition of things as far as we can follow them might help us with a clue. If it be a fact that we have not succeeded as yet in removing the conflict between any two objectives that the human mind ever aimed at, may we not argue that the universe began in some form or other with those objectives? If none of the categories of thought and practice has been proved to be consistent or absolute; if, on the contrary, they have been found to be incompatible one with another, is it conceivable that the universe ever removed the clash or conflict between them?

The issue becomes much clearer if we remember that human activity of any kind is not possible except in terms of the categories that are incompatible. If we have to act, we have to act for the Infinite or Finite, Freedom or

Authority, Universal or Particular, Individuality or Class, economic or cultural life, the life of body or the life of spirit, etc. And it makes no difference whether life takes the inorganic, organic or cellular forms. There too, it may be claimed, the same objectives are bound to appear though in different forms. The trees and stones fall into a state of uncertainty just as they may be expected to arrive at certainty. They have to form the same relation among themselves as human beings, to reach the same goal of unity in the end. And as for their objectives, precisely the same distinctions will apply to them.

If, therefore, it is not possible to conceive of any activity except in terms of the categories, and if those categories do still remain in a state of incompatibility, may we not conclude that they must have formed the objectives of the primal conflict that broke out between God and Satan?

Where, then, do we stand? What has been the total output of the universe? How does human civilization stand?

We stand to-day in the midst of the era of conflict. Evidently the era has not ceased. We are still trying to defend either Freedom or Authority, God or Mammon, etc. The same type of conflict has been continuously renewed in ever varied forms, without any sign of its conclusion. If human history has specialized in anything it must have been in repetition rather than originality.

In our language, the relative God has been from the beginning of the universe doing nothing else but defend either Freedom or Authority, alternately, and for exactly the same period it has been the anxiety of Satan to destroy either Freedom or Authority and that alternately.

God in His relative form did not know how to defend both Freedom and Authority simultaneously. It was either Freedom at the expense of Authority, or Authority at the expense of Freedom that it was possible for him to defend. Similarly, Satan, at the most, destroyed Freedom in the name of Authority and Authority in the name of Freedom.

It was impossible that he should have destroyed both at the same time.

They formed scrupulously opposing centres as they upheld Freedom and Authority respectively. The conflict between them started with Freedom and Authority as the implications of either side. Both sides were positive and both sides were equally defensive or destructive, and, as we have already suggested, behaved like God and Satan respectively.

And if we want to visualize God and Satan in strictly human terms, we might call them by the names of philosopher and sceptic. Satan was, for instance, a very positive person so far as his place and function in the universe was concerned. Satan never assumed the impersonation of the Absolute Negative, exactly as the sceptic of history was by no means even a facsimile of the absolute sceptic. And to call God by the name of philosopher is neither derogatory to the philosopher whom we know nor uncomplimentary to the relative God who, after all, cannot escape illusion.

And yet if it is necessary that the conflict should form the starting-point of the universe, it had to start with illusion. If it was inevitable that God had to enter into conflict, it was equally inevitable that God had to cherish illusion too—for conflict is inconceivable without illusion, and illusion is essentially as harmless as truth

And what could serve as media of illusion so effectively as the incongruous and inconclusive forms to which the main objectives of all activities may be reduced by a process of sheer mutilation? If God and Satan had to function either for Freedom or Authority while they existed as constituents of the realm of possibility, and if they had necessarily to begin in a state of conflict, both Freedom and Authority had to be mutilated and split up into forms which must be incompatible with one another. There is no other way to provide for an efficient staging of conflict between God and Satan; and however dark and sinister

the process might appear, the necessity of illusion made it inevitable and necessary. The exaggerated and exclusive notions of these terms were bound to arise, and the spirit of the universe, whatever the strain, had to evolve them with a truly cosmic ingenuity.

Illusion, it has to be accepted, literally formed the very foundation or corner-stone of the universe, as it was bound to start in conflict. And if the Vedantist meant only to refer to this fact when he deliberately described the whole of the empirical universe as but human illusion, he was perfectly right and sound.

But the universe in conflict is just its primal stage. It is just the opening movement, with all the harsh notes foreboding the grim and the ruthless. It staged the relentless storm and tempest, so that creation began as if it were a sea in the deathless grip of a devouring wind. One heard nothing but its moaning cry bringing news of fresh high seas and of the long, moving spectres of shipwrecks in the freezing, subterranean cold of the embedded rocks.

The drama of shipwreck, it seems, is still on the stage, and how long the play will last is not for man to say. But it is not the only drama intended for the stage of the universe; there is another drama, bound to follow it, and that is the drama of harmony. If God and Satan have fought hard and relentlessly till to-day, there will be quite another scene between them sooner if not later. And it might be interesting to ask whether we have had as yet any sign or trace of that scene.

CHAPTER IX

EQUALITY AND INEQUALITY

Analysis of the belief that harmony did prevail in human history —review of the claims for peace and unity—analysis of the notions Equality and Inequality—no theory tenable—tradition did not find peace, unity or harmony—our theory of Equality and Inequality.

It has been persistently maintained that the sign of true harmony did appear in tradition, and that in as vivid a form as even the most unwary and disconsolate of us could read. There was no culture or race in the long history of the human community which did not hold that the ideal of true harmony, or the life which can bring peace to the individual and fill him with a deep sense of unity, was known. And it was immaterial whether they believed in revelation or refused to believe in it. Whatever the obstacles in the path of the realization of that ideal, and however the human race through centuries on end might have missed its true significance and strayed into the path that led away from it, the ideal and prospect of that peace never left the human horizon. It was definitely claimed that the richest and most profound tradition of the human race held it either in the shape of some historic life lived by a solitary figure or of the legends of continuous historic "realizations" by men and women who lived on this earth, or as a creed or cult necessarily steeped in mystery.

And as we have seen already, it is to this persistent faith in the historic existence of the life of unity and peace that all the warfares in human history could be directly or indirectly traced. Those who fought wars to eliminate whole groups or even races of mankind were goaded by the belief that considerable sections of the human race deliberately

did violence to the life of unity and peace. In their perfectly honest opinion it was not the absence of that life or the failure of the race to discover it that constituted the deficiency of human civilization, but the senseless obstinacy with which considerable sections refused to recognize it. The highest duty of man or woman, it followed, was to make the society of man a fit place for those who had faith, by eliminating the unbelievers, sceptics, and cynics who never missed an opportunity to castigate that immemorial tradition.

It is a strange and curious phenomenon that while men and women preached peace and unity for mankind, they never could desist from waging war against considerable sections of the same mankind. While they scrupulously made professions of goodwill and peace for the whole human race, they sought to materialize that profession by putting to the sword millions and millions of the same race. And this happened not merely in wars that were frankly religious in the main, but also in wars that were waged on the political and economic plane. While equality, liberty, and fraternity for mankind at large were proclaimed with a burning zeal, human life was held as cheap as a pumpkin whenever by chance it cast the shadow of doubt. Even to-day the same inscrutable phenomenon can be seen striding across the political horizon. While freedom for the individual, irrespective of creed, colour, or caste, is preached as an absolute claim, and "anarchy" is suggested as the normal state of man, the way to realization of that goal invariably lies through the horror of warfare.

In the wake of this almost diabolic march of peace it has been difficult to know what is peace or who are the claimants to the heritage and pedigree of man. If God made the universe and created the human species to fill it as its highest and most dignified specimen, could He have meant that the universe or the species should remain for ever as but a riddle?

There are ancient ethical dicta and recent political and

economic theories all of which incline to the claim that man was born free and equal. The community of men was a community of neighbours in which everyone is expected to do unto others as he would be done by and to love his neighbour as himself. It was honestly claimed that differences, even though they might separate man and man by a wide gulf, should not override the fundamental agreement between them. The fact that they belonged to mankind should never be forgotten and all disagreeable reactions that are normally stimulated by culture, race, or temperament should be regulated by the agreement alone. At least in times of acute distress, when life itself was in danger, one should be able to override the differences and come straight to the rescue of one's neighbour. For centuries longer than we can remember the view has been preached and practised by the most ancient tradition of the human race. And at least for two thousand years it has been the official creed of the Western races who held it side by side with their faith in the cult of inequality and compromise.

But by a curious irony all this did not prevent both honest and far-seeing men and women from struggling hard to uphold the opposite view, and it was only natural that the community of men should have been reduced to a mere cockpit of open or subdued struggle between these two competing views. It seemed as if there was nothing to choose between the view that man is born unequal and that liberty and freedom were the birthright of a limited few and the view which was in direct opposition to it, that he was born equal and free.

The historian has to take account of both the views and look for the evidences that would support or dispute them. If thousands of years could have witnessed nothing but a struggle between these two views there must be something profoundly true about both of them. There can be no *prima facie* judgement about them on the basis of mere form and proportion. We have to discover the truth underlying them both.

The evidence in support of the equality of man, which is frankly a categoric or abstract notion, is mostly or purely logical or mystical in origin. The view that all men must be considered as equal is a claim which can be defended by the assumption that there is such a thing as humanity or mankind, which at best is but a logical concept. The stress will have to be laid not on the individual men and women but on the logical backbone which is supposed to hold them together. The evidence naturally becomes controversial, and is bound to suffer from the antinomies of thought. It will be difficult to uphold the creed of equality in the practical affairs of life on the strength of a logical concept such as humanity. And if we shift the source of the evidence to the theological sphere and ground it on the faith that all men are children of God, we have to depend upon the mystical source, which must be even more difficult to uphold. Both the mystical and logical assumptions are furthest removed from what we call historical or concrete existence.

Compared to this type of evidence, the claim that every individual man or woman should be counted as one and not more than one may appear to be perfectly concrete or historical. It has at least the appearance of an empirical view which must be based upon verifiable data. The assumption behind it seems to be that each man is an historical individual, and can be easily judged by the open method of observation and experiment.

But it, too, was nothing more than a hypothesis or a methodological assumption which was intended to work out an economic system or political constitution. It has been found difficult to act up to it, as there are notoriously peoples and races who believe in dictators honestly and faithfully, and count themselves as races markedly superior to others. A dictator's clientele cannot honestly believe that as a race or group they must count as one and not more than one.

The fact is that we have not been able to justify the dictum that man is born equal and free, except by deficient

philosophic claims. And one at least of the weird features of human history was that people who began by believing in the equality of man as a matter of logic or mysticism or robust animal faith very often ended by a vigorous opposition to that belief. When the question of discovering the neighbour arose, and experiment was sincerely made to live together in neighbourly amity, invariably life became difficult to bear sooner or later. The sensitive portion of the brotherhood had to break away and deliberately form a hostile camp. It is an enigma of human history that the advocates of one faith should not hesitate to turn into the antagonists of the same, provided they had time enough to profess or practise it.

But is the view of the opposite school better grounded? Are men and women born unequal?

There is a large amount of apparent evidence which seems to justify this view. If we take two specimens of mankind, for instance, a group belonging to a culture and race which seem to be perpetuating some ancient type and a group and culture belonging to a very modern type, it will be difficult to find considerable agreement between them. It might even be necessary to call them by different names instead of including them within the same human fold.

If, for instance, it is found to be legitimate that the Nordic and the Celtic should be distinguished, or the German and the French, or the Asiatic and the European, there is no reason why the survival of an ancient type should be mixed up with an ultra-modern variation. The term "mankind," if it is still applied to both of them, is bound at this rate to lose its significance. The duties and obligations of the ultra-modern variation could certainly not be regulated by the demand of mankind at large.

If, again, we proceed to judge groups or individual men and women in terms of so-called values or standards that seem to be definite and known, it is impossible that we should classify them all under the same identical head. A

graduation of different degrees of those values is bound to arise. If, for instance, we want to find out whether men and women among different races possess a certain type of intellectual efficiency, or moral stamina, or aesthetic sense, it will be ridiculous to claim that each and every member of every race possesses this equally. If we do not change our mode of comparison we have to grant that there are giants and pigmies in every sphere of life, so that some races may conceivably have only the pigmies and the others the giants.

Besides, it is not a fact that men and women by nature or temperament are always neighbourly. They may be just as neighbourly as they are openly and honestly unfriendly and hostile. Why this should be so is another story. But if you ask a Nordic to be loyal to a Celt except at odd moments of severe pressure he might think you had lost your balance. These disagreements are just as usual and natural as the agreements are. The goal of man may be aloofness from his fellow-men just as much as it may be intimate companionship with them. There seems to be no hard and fast rule about human relationships.

But do these evidences, even if they are not altogether challenged, constitute a proof for inequality among the groups of races or individuals?

In the first place, the question of equality or inequality is not identical with the question of disagreement or difference. Two groups of men and women may disagree with or differ from one another; still they may be perfectly evenly balanced. As a matter of fact, the most far-reaching difference which relation of incompatibility implies is just the case of absolute equality. The Ass of Buridan would not have met with that disagreeable accident if there was anything to choose between the two stacks of hay.

The most primitive group of men, the group that is supposed to perpetuate their ancestry in immaculate purity, need not be regarded as unequal to the latest variant of the

human species simply because we find it difficult to squeeze them into the culture of the same mould.

In the second place, the method of valuation or comparison on the basis of a fixed standard is not necessarily the method of arriving at truth. The standard or value, whether it is diffuse or abstract, such as humanity, or somewhat less diffuse and more concrete, such as civilized and uncivilized, Asiatic or European, intellectual and constructive, is nothing more accurate or intelligible than a concept or category. It lacks the capacity of representing an individual, who is bound to be unique and is difficult to be located in historic existence.

The grades and levels that have been made as a result of judging groups in terms of standards and for political and economic convenience are arbitrary. Groups, like individuals are unique and independent in their identity and capacity. They cannot be treated as instances of a standard or value. Nor could the instances be reduced to a series of degrees of the same value. If we are resolved to serve truth and not pragmatic consideration we cannot deviate from the absolute claim of the instances.

There is, no doubt, the mathematical ambition or quantitative reading of events and facts. It will be a mistake to suggest that it has all been altogether day-dreaming. Perhaps even to the mathematician, the fact or event might not have appeared as something fixed or static which is either a whole number or a fraction. The fact or event is a function which achieves an end or fails to achieve it. Its peculiarity and uniqueness is guaranteed by the Law of Identity. To trace it to an already accomplished fact as a partial manifestation of it, or to reduce it to a phase or a process of evolution which an accomplished and ever-present entity chooses to undergo, is to perpetuate a myth of logical tradition. It will be sheer waste of time to wait long over such fruitless attempts. If the case for "number" could not be made in any other way, it has to be put in the old melting-pot which,

like the cauldron of the witch, burnt all things that were weird and pretentious. There must be a much better case for our mathematician, on whom devolved the responsibility of verifying the losing cause of the philosophers of formal logic.

Finally, the fact that groups and individuals differ to the extent of being unfriendly and hostile to one another need not be construed as an evidence for inequality. One cannot claim on the strength of mere differences that groups and individuals must be unequal—one can certainly claim that there was no ground for a common life. That is another story, and a very good rejoinder to those who would have human cohesion for peaceful living under any circumstances and at any cost.

The evidence for equality or inequality of man is equally difficult to find if we go by tradition alone. The fundamental truth about man is that he is as much in agreement with his fellow-men as he is in disagreement with them. And in both cases there is not the slightest reason to deny that he is unique and peculiar. It makes no difference whether men belonged to the same race or cult or culture, or to different races, cults, and cultures. As individuals they could not be disposed of or summarized as numerical instances in a graded series or as more or less complete instances of some standard. They must be all treated as independent and original, with a function to discharge which never was discharged before nor will be repeated afterwards.

The ethical dicta and the political and economic theories which are traceable to them have to be reinterpreted if we do not discard them as altogether meaningless nonsense. If we have still to believe in the equality or inequality of men in spite of our failure to justify our beliefs in them we have to look for some more consistent explanation.

Let us, to begin with, build up a theory of their historical origin.

Perhaps the two positions about equality and inequality arose from two opposite interpretations of the basal fact

that individuals and groups are unique. Both sides to this controversy must have fully realized that uniqueness was the main feature of the multiple individuals and groups which constituted human society. Conceivably they could not have denied the reality of the constituents which in some form or other were literally particulars or individuals.

But after this agreement as to the uniqueness of the multiple instances, one side chose to interpret it as a source of equality and cohesion among men, while the other followed the opposite course and interpreted it as the source of inequality and division.

Because every individual is unique, every individual must be equal to every other, which really means that they can or should live together in the same society and on equal terms. And to this interpretation the additional fact that individuals and groups did appear in agreement at times served as a distinct source of stimulus and encouragement.

On the other hand the interpretation of the other school was that as every individual is unique they must be unequal to one another, and must live in classes and grades within the same society. And in this interpretation they were definitely encouraged by the fact of disagreements and differences which also happened to exist among individuals and groups.

The main issue was not about equality or inequality but about the meaning of uniqueness. The issue was whether uniqueness did or did not imply either agreement or difference, equality or inequality.

So far as we know, tradition dealt with multiplicity of unique individual centres in two ways:—

(*a*) The monistic view was that they were absolutely equal parts of some one whole, or they were unequal parts of that whole. Reality in this view was supposed to be a whole with parts. And it made no difference whether the parts were regarded as effects or manifestations or as mere parts.

(*b*) The pluralistic view was that they were absolutely unequal or incompatible entities and centres. Reality in this view was supposed to be either a situation in which the multiple centres exist unrelated and completely independent of each other, or in a relation of different types and forms of subordination.

The question of equality or inequality was bound to arise. The theory of unique individuals as parts of a whole, whether equal or unequal parts, implied a cohesion and fundamental agreement among the individuals. Parts are bound to cohere in the common whole. Perhaps the democratic view of the West and the Hindu view, which is different from the democratic view, may be traced to this theory.

On the other hand, the theory of unique individuals as unrelated centres or centres which lie in a relation of subordination implied either absolute freedom or a society in which individuals or groups exist in a relation of more or less freedom or destitution. Perhaps the imperialistic and autocratic claims may be traced to this theory.

It followed that the democratic or the Hindu view had to believe in the theory of equalization all round or denial of private ownership, while the autocratic views had to choose between absolute isolation or aloofness and unequal distribution of rights, and opportunities for life.

And it was only natural that they should still be fighting with one another instead of composing their differences. There is nothing unnatural in the strange fact that while peace for humanity has been steadily preached the democrats should have been all the time fighting with the autocrats. The fact was that the autocrats did not form a part of mankind, according to the democrats, and were not entitled to democratic peace. Similarly, if the autocrats fought the democrats, although the latter promised peace and equality to all mankind, the reason was that the peace and equality of the democrat meant that all men should live together on

the same standard of living, even though they are not equals. Such a peace was fatal to the equanimity of the autocrat, to whom the life of freedom, apart and aloof from the common herd, was the only rational ideal of peaceful life.

As the ideals of life which the democrat and aristocrat held differed, their conceptions of mankind differed, and after that, peace and equality were bound to mean quite different things to them.

We do not see how this interpretation of history can be disputed or disapproved. If the monistic or the pluralistic view of Reality is all that we can hold about the universe, no other conclusion is possible. If we have failed to make a case either in favour of equality or inequality, it is easy to see why the strange movements for peace arose in the human community, which meant peace either by levelling down arbitrarily all differences to one common plane or preserving a society of grades and levels. No third method or device has so far been suggested. If there was no ground for our claim to equality or inequality, there was no basis for our movement for peace.

So we did not find peace or freedom or unity. We only worked for different types of freedom and peace, which invariably meant an exclusion or emasculation of a large section of the human community. No culture or race need claim to have achieved anything more or better than this. There has been, as yet, no sign of true unity or peace anywhere in human history. To use a political slang, it has been either a temporary truce or party peace. Neither the human race nor perhaps the universe at large had any occasion as yet to evolve either unity or peace.

And the reason why peace and unity have not been found so far is that we did not know what Reality was, or our knowledge of Reality was not sufficient to give us the chance of discovering it. The monistic and pluralistic views of Reality which were all that we had, were by no means

sufficient for that purpose. They were only sufficient for the purpose of giving us a peace and unity which came direct from the womb of conflict, and which always served the victors alone at the expense of those who lay beaten and vanquished.

The traditional theories of equality and inequality have to be dropped and we have to get back to the original agreement about the multiple particulars or individuals to find out if they can be reinterpreted. We have to ask the question, again, what happens to these multiple particulars if they cannot be either monistically or pluralistically interpreted. If they have to be accepted as unique in the sense that they cannot be discarded as illusory or reduced to one another or deduced from any whole, could we not discover any future prospects for them which need not be interpreted in terms of equality or inequality as they were understood by tradition. Let us recapitulate.

We have already seen that though the multiple particulars are unique they stand necessarily related: and the relation is in dual form, conflict and harmony in succession. It is not true that they can be different only in the sense of being in conflict; they can also be different in the sense of agreeing with one another. The relation of difference is a sign of both clash and agreement. Besides, when they clash they stand as incompatibles, exactly as they are complementaries and nothing else when they harmonize. Finally, it is a very important truth to remember that whether they clash or co-operate they remain unique and independent. Nothing can interfere with their uniqueness.

Both equality and inequality, if we keep to the terms of this analysis, can be re-interpreted. We may consistently define equality to mean the claim that the individuals or groups, whether they are in agreement or conflict, must be treated in exactly the same way with regard to their obligations and rights. If conflict means necessarily restraint and sacrifice, they must naturally practise restraint and sacrifice

and not put forth effort to realize a claim. If, on the other hand, harmony means mutual contribution, the contribution must be equally and strictly proportionate, which it is bound to be. It makes no difference whether the competing and co-operating centres are as wide as the poles or as near as the two eyes in the human head. Equality in this sense of strictly proportionate or uniquely relative treatment (mutual sacrifice and mutual contribution), is bound to prevail.

On the other hand, inequality may be defined as scrupulous originality or independence of the centres concerned, whether in conflict or harmony. They are unequal in the sense or to the extent that they must be regarded as pure, unique and specific. There can be no occasion to confuse them or to reduce them to some one level. Society, at this rate, can never be a question of uniform standard or level or culture; the varieties must be preserved and the main issue of social living will normally consist in harmonizing the diverse and varied levels in terms of a common purpose, and not by way of standardizing them. The claim to immaculate purity is the heart of the demand for inequality. It is the one sense in which absolute freedom is an intelligible notion.

CHAPTER X

CLAIMS OF HISTORY

The changes that we are suggesting need not be inconsistent with what the modern man has been looking for—a radical change has been in demand in our conception of Divinity, as well as the values which shape cultures and form the basis of our life —conflict is no longer the objective of the human race—the traditional arts, cultures, and divinities which served as media of conflict do not appeal to the modern mind—history, to the modern mind, has been nothing but a deposit of failures and frustrations—there has been nothing like peace or unity or stability in human history.

It is another story whether our theory of equality and inequality will appeal to those who profess the traditional view. We happen to hold it precisely because it is the only theory that is conceivable to us. We can only hope that it will gradually appeal to all as the logical ground on which it stands comes to be more and more clear to them.

If it is permissible to hope that the traditional metaphysics may be reformed in the light of our theory about Reality, there should be a change not only about equality and inequality, but also about unity, peace and beauty. Perhaps it has to be seriously contemplated whether every one of the major traditional conceptions should have to be re-defined or re-interpreted. And it may be difficult to hold that what we considered to be perfect ideal or art was truly perfect or without a flaw. If the ethical dicta which have come down to us as the highest evolution of human morality are found to be incomplete, the arts or cultures which were patterned or modelled on them need not necessarily be perfect.

And if we suggest such changes, we do so with a perfectly clear sense that it may run counter to our long-inherited sentiments and traditional habits. Yet we do not mean to be offensive, much less banal or vandalistic.

Our social institutions and rooted habits are the only resources that we draw upon in our time of need. If misfortune and calamity could not be quite avoided with their aid, our survival as a race was to a great extent due to them alone. We could not have survived to this day and looked for a better or more secure existence if in the course of long centuries they had not been our sole protection.

It will be stupid to forget this obvious fact of human history, and any attempt which may be purely subversive in its aim should be severely censured. The critic can legitimately claim to reverse a process or alter a habit or even an institution if only he has something stabler, securer and ampler to put in their places. Destruction on its own account should never be a deliberate end; we can only submit to it if it is hurled at our head as an accident or visitation of Providence.

It is inconceivable that we should deliberately offend or unduly agitate human sentiment, or upset inherited modes of behaviour that conduce more or less to social living. Nor should we be in the mood to forget our debt of gratitude to the institutions which made it possible for us to see differently from our ancestors. If it is still not possible to escape the chance of creating disagreeable reactions from those institutions, we can console ourselves that such reactions are inevitable. If we have to change our deepest sentiments and the faiths or cultures which for centuries we have been cherishing, the process of change may not be altogether agreeable as we should normally like it to be. If there has to be a stage of transition between two distinct moments of history, it can but take this form of a period of discipline, which is both necessary and desirable.

And yet the discipline in question need not be in any sense severe, certainly not fatal. Its sole object can but lie in preparing the ground for the constructive setting on which the life that is to follow will be staged. If we had not assured ourselves of that new life which is stabler and more secure, we should be repeating the mistake of the wanton critic.

Besides we are not suggesting any change which is not

being directly desired or looked for by a considerable section of the human community. If the modern man may be legitimately supposed to have departed from his faith in the Omnipotent God and Incarnate Evil, the signs and symbols of that God and Evil must have long ago ceased to stimulate his mind. If we can with perfect consistency hold that our Gods, whether they were mystical creations or historical beings, drew all their significance or potency from the conception of Omnipotent God, we have to believe that with a steady fall in the credit of the Omnipotent God there should be a proportionate change in our devotion and loyalty to traditional worship. We cannot go on worshipping the gods and goddesses of history as our ancestors or forefathers did, if the accumulating experience since their days did almost inevitably sap the foundation of a belief in the Omnipotent God.

Nor could we go on making of the great characters of history who patterned their life on the gods and goddesses the ideal or standard of our life as our forefathers did. We have to build fresh characters and set new standards for the posterity that will look back to us as we looked back to our ancestors. The whole ideal or conception of greatness has to be re-formulated.

Like greatness in character, greatness in art and achievement will have to assume a different appearance. We shall have to build differently, paint differently and sing differently. There will be another music, perhaps repeating more faithfully than ever before the music of the spheres of which we always dreamt but never heard. And the great men and women who will build the ramparts of our social home in league with the best that generous Nature can offer to mankind will have an altogether different achievement to their credit. In the place of the soldier who braved the darkest night or the ascetic who held torture in the palm of his hand, other figures will come and the human home will stand in a deep unruffled pool of crystal purity.

And if we honestly hold this strange view about the change that is being looked for, we do so on the ground that we have not as yet been able to live any life which is not one of conflict or sheer antagonism. If we have to believe that the universe, since it began, never had a chance to wind up its continuous process of creating conflicts, we could not hold that the perfect characters or perfect arts or perfect achievements of history were any better than efficient and powerful media of heaping up conflict upon conflict. The greatest souls of history have been responsible for what we have described as the long-drawn-out tragedies of human existence. In their name, or under their leadership, movements began and spread for long centuries, filling the human world either with the wreckage of the field of battle or with the agony exuded by the continuous suppression by persuasion of beliefs and faiths. And if we want to make a valuation of the arts and achievements confidently carried with us through centuries as the only witness of human triumph, it will be a mistake to claim for them any value or potency that is not directly or indirectly associated with conflict. There has been no art which did not uphold a God or an ideal directly challenged by some other God or ideal. As we cannot conceive of any form of human activity except in terms of the competing categories—Infinite and Finite, Freedom and Authority, etc.—so we cannot dissociate our Gods and ideals from either our activities or categories. We can easily find an explanation of all the Gods and ideals of history in these competing categories. The beauty and strength which any art or culture bequeathed to the human race belonged to a section of it as its own treasure over which it alone could hold a claim. The light did not shine beyond a particular horizon; if in a moment of expansive sentiment its flood-gates were opened for all horizons there soon followed a conflagration which in the end reduced all the Gods of their history to ashes. It is a truth which no historian should miss that as every God has his rival, so every

Prophet, art and culture had his or its rival also. The beauty and strength that radiated from them served a section or group in their honest and strenuous attempt to beat the rival Gods, arts, and cultures. There has been no God who meant peace for the human race, much less for the earth and the universe, since Gods, and with them Prophets, have been either fighting with their rival Gods and Prophets or trying to assimilate them by persuasion, sacrifice, and toleration. We never celebrated any event or achievement which did not directly imply the disappearance or suppression of other events or achievements. We never achieved any glory which did not imply a shame or humiliation of others. Our Gods have always been the backbone of our main occupation, an incessant fight or struggle with our neighbours. They came to us, as the poet might say, while we were resting, worn out after an exhaustive struggle. And the historian might locate the birth-moment of these Gods or Prophets between two epic fights when both sides lay facing mutual extinction. They came just to put new life and full vigour into humanity so that they might open the epic fight once again.

We have no hesitation in giving this lurid account of our Gods and Prophets, events and achievements. It is absurdly true, as even the soldier and the ascetic, the main contribution to our history, will cheerfully testify. And the grounds on which we hold this view are two:

(*a*) Logically the universe could not have reached a stage when conflict was completed and harmony began.

(*b*) Historically we have had no instance of real peace or harmony, no instance where the soldier and the ascetic did not exhaust the possibilities.

As regards the first point, our whole metaphysic is offered as an evidence. There is no reason to labour it. But a word or two may be added about the second.

It may be claimed that if history has been a record of

failure and despair, we have to look for an explanation of that disagreeable fact in the deficiency and feebleness of the human individuals who actually staged that history. There was nothing wrong with either the ideals or standards or with the few individual instances that, like the polar star, served as the brilliant and vivid examples of them. There was not a man or woman, whatever their incompleteness or indifference, who did not know and feel what it was, or how desirable it was, to follow them. Human history was as full of ideal precepts and directions for right and wholesome living as it was crowded with failures and disappointments. To our ancestors and our contemporaries the contrast between ideals and practice was so vivid and irritating that they could hardly escape the nemesis of desperate efforts to bridge the gulf between them. All the wars that we have fought, as well as the long role of patient and sacrificing life that we have undergone, were, at bottom, the result of our anxiety to preserve the ideals.

The claim is not true. The failures did not bring down merely the actors on the stage, they brought down their principles too. After every display, whether on the field of battle or on the plane of emotion and thought, nothing was left of either the ideals or the men and women who sought to carry them out. Ideals clashed with ideals, exactly as the men and women who fought or argued or sacrificed on their behalf clashed with one another. Time after time both sides lost faith in their ideals after they had closed in mortal fight, and equally failed to establish their faith. Neither side convinced the other nor did they succeed in preserving their own faith. Time after time they reached the very edge of despair and had nothing left to which they could go back with confidence.

This drama has been enacted in human history from the dawn of social consciousness to this day. We are witnessing the latest rehearsal of it, even as we are recording our reaction to it. May we hope that it is the last of its brood

and will serve as the prelude to a different achievement by man.

But there is one more point which we might mention before we close this review of the failure of history.

It is said that we have to draw a line between the origin and growth of an ideal and its positive clash with other ideals. There is a moment in human history when the ideals seem to come to life, and that moment is not apparently the moment of conflict. The moment of conflict, as convention suggests, presupposes the birth of the ideals and is not due before the ideal is born and fully matured.

Besides, if the moment of the birth of an ideal has to be kept separate from the moment of the conflict between ideals, we may be under the illusion of calling it the moment of peace. We should be the more anxious to call it by that name as the ideal was bound to appear to us to be universal in its scope. It was not possible that we should resist the temptation to claim for the birth of such an ideal what one would be justified in claiming for the birth of universal peace and harmony. The whole of human history is an evidence of this long-persisting illusion of the human mind.

Besides, the birth of a new ideal or gospel or message of hope coincides, according to the same convention, with a new formation among the groups of mankind. As this birth follows an epic fight which ended in a mutual consent of the competing sides to hold the fight in abeyance, it presupposed fresh formation of groups on either side. Here is a moment when the competing sides, like exhausted, jaded armies after they recouped their energy in compulsory rest, reappear in fresh formations. In history we hear of "alliances" and "combinations" in which even youth and the very ancient and primitive are supposed to play a part.

We hear naturally of great achievement and fulfilment of missions. Great arts follow the great Prophets who herald those new formations. The world is told in grim, stentorian

accents that the new race of men has arrived, and peace and harmony must henceforth perpetually reign on earth.

But the truth is that nothing happens in these new formations that can bring about universal peace or unity of mankind. Whatever the promise they might bring to those fortunate recipients of the new message, they could not bring any message for mankind at large. The greatness of its new Prophets and the exquisite beauty of its new art had potency enough only for the new groups who found them and built them with the sweat of their brow. There can be no question about their effectiveness in their life. If you take the prophets and arts out of the life of these new people you leave them nothing to stand on. You cannot distinguish between the new people and the new cultures that they professed.

When men built cathedrals, mosques and temples they believed honestly that the light that showed them the way to those masterpieces came straight from heaven. It will be stupid and senseless to argue that these great creations and the Gods and Prophets who were enshrined in them did not fill the soul and mind of men with rapture and sustain them in whatever tasks they were called upon to do. Human history can point to such moments of achievement as the best and highest that man ever attained.

But it is not true that these arts and the messages of peace and unity that they embodied were meant for man as man. They were never so meant. The fact, on the contrary, is that sooner or later they appeared arranged in serried ranks as armies do in the field of battle. We hear no more of peace and unity of mankind, but of ruthless efforts to shape the destiny of mankind in the light of some one or other of them. The peace and unity which each professed for mankind served as but a source of sorrow and shame to every other. In the end, the total result took the form of a universal chaos, when no God or Prophet or art who or which at one time or other shone in the light of heaven seemed to be

anything but a skeleton or formula or routine of gestures, or a mere assortment of stone or paint or sounds. This is the plain, unvarnished truth which anybody can verify by reference to any part of human history.

True harmony and gracious peace which could result from that alone, never did appear in the whole course of human history. Strange as it may seem it was not yet time for the stage of conflict to come to an end. For so long we have had nothing but the chance of cultivating conflict, and that in rich profusion and on an ever-increasing scale. It is inconceivable that there should have been true harmony or peace, precisely because it was not known how conflict, as such, could be given the quietus. It was not known that it is the cessation of conflict, the final conclusion of it, that alone can prepare the stage for peace. We had yet to learn that harmony could not appear a moment too soon.

The methods that we have so far followed could only cultivate and create conflict. Neither the method of warfare nor the method of persuasion was capable of completing it. And we cannot claim that we devised any other method; we fought and persuaded till we were driven to a state of despair. We came back to the same routine and procedure after we had time enough to recoup our strength. And the same result followed. It never struck us that conflict of interest and views meant that the interests in question were contraries and incompatibles. We did not realize that it was inconceivable that either side could realize its object; we missed the true method of coming to the end of a conflict and completing it in the true sense of the term. The whole of human history is nothing but experiment in warfare and persuasion whose one achievement was the evolution of conflict in ever varied form. It could not be anything else.

What we called harmony, peace and unity, was not even a semblance of the real thing. It was only an illusion. For the peace and harmony that history recorded was but a preliminary stage to a fresh conflict. It meant the formation

of new groups, with new Gods and Prophets, and a technique never known before of dealing with rivals. Its significance lay in its potency to cope with the strain of a fresh struggle. Its sole object was to establish itself on the wreckage of its rivals. It was furthest removed from true harmony which excludes conflict altogether from its horizon.

To be precise, we have to take the birth of new Gods and new Prophets and fresh formations of groups as but a definite stage in the conflict. What is popularly called the lull in the fight or the preparation for it is, after all, only the fight in a different shape and form. The truth is that the conflict never ceases so long as it is not brought to an end. It only changes its form. Neither the victor nor the beaten enemy is out of the conflict even for a moment or a day. While the one side celebrates victory the other side is heaping up curses. It is only the technique of the fight that changes. To celebrate victory is not to enfold the enemy in good will and love; it is only to paralyze his last, lingering spirit by the glamour of boast. And the more eloquent it is, the more bitter is the curse that follows in its wake. Who can tell what harm is done by curse or swagger after victory that provokes it!

And this curse which rises out of the anguish of the spirit broken on the field of battle does not cease until a new God or a new Prophet appears again on the horizon of the beaten enemy. The new God or new Prophet or new cult is a herald of a new offensive that must be taken to retrieve the losses and shame of defeat. A new technique of warfare or persuasion is adopted, and all the arts that follow in the wake of that new life are nothing but war-drums that beat out rhythms to guide the steps of the new people marching on to a new heaven. The epic of warfare begins again in full earnest and does not come to a close before the curtain falls on a field of despair.

Nothing, therefore, that the human race every discovered, whether as faith, or art or mode of living, was anything but

a direct or indirect aid to some section or other of the human race with which to beat its rivals or antagonists or foes. There was nothing in any of them that could be called by the name of peace or beauty or stability. Cultures or civilizations, however you may construe their significance, were but instruments with which to win a war or assimilate an opponent. The joy that we found in them and the assurance that they gave us and the way they moved us were all only the result of victory in war or the assimilation of an enemy. Never for a moment did they escape the curses or the gloom that arose from the deadened spirit of the enemy. So long as the enemy, the beaten foe, was there, there was no escape from warfare. And it never was a fact that he was not there.

CHAPTER XI

THE ETHICAL STANDPOINT

The stage of conflict, which is still prevailing, has two phases: (*a*) creation of conflict; (*b*) conclusion of conflict—the second has fallen due—evidence—analysis of the second phase—method by which conflict can be concluded—its relation to asceticism—analysis of asceticism—our theory—analysis of the notion of value—our theory—distinction between apprehension of truth and realization of it—recapitulation of our theory of voluntary and mutual self-discipline.

We hope we have succeeded in showing that the claim that tradition did develop and evolve the ideal of unity and peace was totally unfounded. Our analysis of the ethical dicta on which this claim was posited ought to be sufficient or satisfactory as evidence. We did not know what equality meant nor did we ever profess any Divinity who could be worshipped by mankind at large. Our prophets and our arts and cultures that were built on the gospels that they preached had none of the universality about them which is essential for unity and peace. It is stark, naked truth that we have hitherto been worshipping not only historical Gods associated with definite groups but Gods whose chief function was to evolve conflicts instead of concluding them. Our prophets never by any chance helped us to find the God of harmony and peace, nor did they show us the way to work for the unity of mankind. They led us to warfare and to the equally fatal method of dealing with differences, the method of persuasion. The ideal of unity that they preached invariably meant either elimination or emasculation of the largest section of the human race. And this unity, though it seemed at times to have been achieved, did not last long or bear any fruit like the fruit of harmony and peace. We cannot help repeating this truth. It is time that there was an end of the

false claim on their behalf that they gave us unity and peace or held the promise of any such unity before our eyes. The universe, and the human society that we know a little better, has so far been specializing in evolving conflicts. Even the stage of completing the conflict did not arrive, if we go by tradition or its faithful representation in contemporary life.

Our conclusion that the universe began with the stage of conflict, and is still in the midst of it, stands. There is enough evidence to support this position, as our long review of the claim to unity and peace has shown.

We shall now proceed to discuss the next stage of the process, and after that the final stage, the relation of harmony and its results. And by the time we have brought that analysis to a close it will be time for us to discuss Polytheism and Monotheism again in the light of our own position. There will be one more question to deal with, to complete this long enquiry—worship in its relation to personal God and the place of image in worship.

The next stage in the process will consist wholly in bringing the long era of conflict to an end. The universe will put a stop to the process of creating conflicts which it has been pursuing ever since the beginning of the discontinuous realm. There will be a change in the mode and method of dealing with the differences which created the conflicts. Both the modes of warfare and persuasion will have to be dropped precisely because they created nothing but conflict. As the poet might say, the long night of conflict is on the wane.

And yet the specific ground of our assurance about the imminence of the new era is that the objectives, about which the historic conflicts arose, need no longer be taken as incompatibles. If we could not hitherto help clashing in realizing Freedom or Authority, or any other value, it is not necessary that we must still continue clashing about them. The whole of our metaphysic has been one continuous effort to prove that the categories about which we clashed

are not incompatibles. We have no longer any excuse to fight for freedom and authority, infinite and finite, universal and particular. We can preserve both freedom and authority, infinite and finite, etc., if we want to. There is no reason why we should not distinguish between their old, classical forms and those which our re-interpretation has given them.

The issue that we ought to discuss now is the method and mode of dealing with conflicts, which is bound to be entirely different from that of warfare and persuasion. If conflict will have to be brought to an end, what exactly is the method by which it could be brought to an end? If warfare and persuasion can only create conflict, what method is it that does not create it but puts an end to it? If there are to be two distinct stages of conflict—the stage in which conflicts are created and the stage in which they are brought to an end—what is the distinction between the methods which must prevail in them respectively?

Broadly speaking, the method must be the method of mutual and voluntary self-discipline. It means fundamentally that the competing sides must mutually and voluntarily abstain from realizing the ends or objectives which created the conflict. The discipline that will follow is the discipline of sheer endurance, which self-restraint and abstention imply. The technique in the main will consist in localizing or discovering the objectives that are in conflict and then devoting all available energy to the supreme task of abstaining from them.

It is abstention from the attempt to fulfil or realize the objectives that will take the place of the attempt to fulfil them. Instead of the two groups fighting with one another on the field of battle or trying to persuade one another in a less noisy atmosphere, they will engage in a voluntary and whole-hearted effort to resist the temptation or inclination to fight or persuade. In the place of warfare or persuasion there will be a voluntary effort at renunciation, a self-restraint which may mean heavy and painful sacrifice. Perhaps the nearest instance of such a technique will be

found in the historic mode of Asiatic or ascetic self-abnegation.

And yet the abstention in question is suggested not as a matter of sacrifice, as if there were a God of justice to appease or the only way of right living was to forgo what was one's due and privilege. Abstention is the only logical conclusion as a method, on the ground that the objectives are unrealizable by their nature. If they are at this stage incompatible and necessarily incapable of being realized, there is no reason why one should fight for them and fail. The only rational course is to get rid of the inclination to realize them by sheer self-discipline. If it is necessary that we must cherish the unrealizable objective, it need not be necessary that we should waste further energy on them by trying the impossible task of realizing them.

And yet again, this method of self-discipline, whatever its resemblance to the technique of historic asceticism, is a long way removed from that noble tradition.

There are two types of ascetic so far as tradition goes:

(*a*) The type which is frankly militant and behaves exactly like the soldier.
(*b*) The type which is the soul of persuasion whose object is to assimilate the less complete to the more complete.

As regards the first type, the militant ascetic, by a long tradition, is supposed to be at war with the "world, the flesh, and the devil." It is a familiar story that he would stick at nothing to destroy the claims which this celebrated trinity professed in the neighbourhood of the spiritual world. If the militant ascetic had by some miracle achieved his long-sought end, there would be no world or flesh to-day, not to say the devil.

But it so happened that a very considerable section of the human race could not subscribe to this strong ascetic view. It was much too drastic and unnatural and created

for that absorbing figure in human history an awe bordering on the uncanny rather than a warm attachment. Perhaps the old prehistoric cult of magic, especially in its weird and mysterious form, was suspected by many to lie concealed in the severe practices of militant asceticism. It was the ruthlessness of the practice, as it cast severe reflection on anything which made human history joyous and beautiful, that stimulated suspicion. To the vast majority of men and women it was much too mortifying for any sensible and healthy living. They invariably kept the militant ascetic at a distance and offered him respectful services as men and women offer worship to an angry God to appease his wrath.

Yet there was nothing in militant asceticism which was not just the logical extreme of the cult of distrust and violence which the familiar type of militancy so obviously implies. If we look for what we usually consider as purity and detachment in militancy we should leave the field of political and economic existence and go to the spiritual realm of the ascetic. Nowhere else would one come across such a devoted and whole-hearted attempt to live the life of simplicity, restraint, and abnegation as in the history of militant asceticism. It may almost be said in the language of the poet that the militant ascetic, by virtue of his simple and rigorous life, is just one continuous stretch of thin flame against the infinite background of endless sky. Not even the saintly mendicant who lived on alms and for mankind could reach up to this height. Here is an attempt, at enormous cost to all that social man ever valued, to live the life of pure spirit, an attempt which was instinct with the one desire to make human "soul" and the divine spark that was supposed to reside in it prevail over everything else. The case for militant asceticism never failed to draw the human mind with immense power, even though it was frankly the one formidable agent that could easily prove fatal to social existence.

Unlike militant asceticism, asceticism of the second type

was more a moral and ethical process than a spiritual experiment. It was the belief or creed of those who were engaged in the healthy and benevolent attempt to persuade men and women to leave the path of the less complete and perfect life and rise up to the more complete and perfect. The ascetic of this school was in no sense militant. The world and the flesh did not appear to him as false and evil incarnate. As we explained many a time before, the multiple forms of life were not taken as either spiritual or natural, divine or non-divine, true or false, but as degrees of spirit or Divinity or truth. The method of dealing with differences, therefore, was one of persuasion, and the object in view was assimilation and not elimination. Distrust and violence, in consequence, did not play any part in this scheme. In their place we find the direct opposites, restraint, sacrifice and toleration. The ascetic note was struck in the moral code which was based upon the technique of sacrifice and restraint. If it did not build on the negation of social existence, it did build on clean and pure living which in the last analysis meant an abeyance of personal satisfaction and enjoyment till the less complete and perfect had been assimilated by the more complete and perfect. The world and the flesh were not denied but only its adequate and perfect type was affirmed and emphasized.

What the history of the human race derived from this form of asceticism it is needless to repeat. We have so far understood by civilization nothing but this form of ascetic living. And most of our dismay and regret in life arose from nothing so much as the painful fact of its repeated failures.

And yet it can hardly be claimed that true asceticism, the key to which can be found in nothing but renunciation, was either known to or practised by the one or the other of the two historic types. There was restraint and abnegation in the strenuous practices of these two types. Nothing nobler or more profound was known in history. But the heart of asceticism, which is but true renunciation, was not there.

And it might be perfectly arguable that the main feature of our method which we have described as the method of voluntary and mutual self-discipline lies exactly in its insistence on "renunciation" as the only method of dealing with conflict. The competing sides in a relation of conflict are called upon by this method to renounce their respective ends which created that conflict. And it makes no difference if the values are constituted by spirit, soul and God on the one side and the world, the flesh and the devil on the other. The point of renunciation is that emphasis should be laid on the act of negation of values as such rather than on their realization. What is of supreme importance in a conflict is that negation, as such, should be made the sole and only objective; and as values are essential for such an act or procedure, negation will consist in wholesale abstention from realizing those values.

The human mind in its mood of renunciation is never removed from contact with values. A condition of the human mind in which values do not play any part is inconceivable. The issue never is whether we can reduce ourselves to a state in which our minds are scrupulously bereft of any desire or objective; the issue is whether it is necessary that if human minds have to have desires and values, it must be indispensable for them to realize those values. The method of renunciation implies that there are moments or states in which mind is called upon to abstain from realizing values. Its sole function with regard to those values is that the human mind must make an effort not to realize them.

The implication is that values appear in two distinct forms:

(*a*) The form in which the function with regard to them is negation or abstention—this appears in conflict.
(*b*) The form in which the function with regard to them is affirmation or realization—this appears in harmony.

And if we accept this implication, it follows that the competing values such as freedom and authority, infinite and

finite etc., or soul and God on the one hand and world, flesh, and devil on the other, should have to be equally renounced or abstained from. What happens in renunciation is not that spirit is sought to be realized at the expense of the world, or the soul at the expense of flesh, or God at the expense of devil. Instead, both spirit and world, soul and flesh, God and Satan are equally renounced. Neither of them is recognized as the absolute value or standard in the light of which alone the other could be judged. Both, on the contrary, are equally questioned as value, and consequently the efforts that are made with regard to them consist in resisting the inclination to realize them.

If the values have to be there, the temptation or inclination to realize them has to be there as well. And it is precisely this inclination that forms the sole subject-matter for the human mind to resist or abstain from. The issue in conflict is one, as it were, of preventing a waste, or avoiding a fruitless endeavour. Renunciation is a sort of cathartic; it implies that the human mind cannot possibly escape cherishing values which are illusions, and then rigidly prescribes the course of resisting the temptation to realize them.

The result of the application of this method, therefore, is dual:

(*a*) It concludes the conflict by reducing the opposing values and ideas to a deadlock or absurdity.
(*b*) It produces the sense of relief which arises out of the fact that an unnecessary waste or blunder has been averted.

And to see exactly the significance of this dual result we should discriminate between the two stages of conflict:

(*a*) The stage in which conflicts are created.
(*b*) The stage in which conflicts are completed or brought to an end.

In the first stage, it was the impasse that came into existence after the competing sides had alternately won and lost. And

after that impasse neither side could go on fighting any longer. And so, inevitably, either confusion or suspense was the final phase of conflict.

In the second stage which is devoted entirely to the conclusion of the conflict, warfare and persuasion are necessarily abjured and voluntary efforts are made to abstain from realizing the values. The values are accepted as false or illusory, although they appeared to be valid and sound. They are naturally resisted and relief, as a matter of course, is the inevitable result.

And if we accept this theory of renunciation, we have to distinguish between genuine renunciation and the traditional type of it. The renunciation of the traditional ascetic was based upon the assumption that the world and the flesh constituted falsehood, the contradictory of truth. And the truth to him was spirit and soul. In so far as it was held that spirit and soul constituted the truth, the world and the flesh formed necessarily the subject-matter of renunciation. There was no sense or idea of what we have described as illusion in the scheme of traditional asceticism. Renunciation, in our sense, was not conceivable or possible to it, as renunciation is inconceivable without illusion.

In any case we have to keep in mind one or two points if we are to form an accurate idea of the distinction between our idea of asceticism and renunciation and that of tradition:

(*a*) Conflict was understood by tradition to be a relation of contradictories. Naturally, it was formulated in the form of a relation between truth and falsehood, or good and evil, right and wrong, spirit and matter and so on.

(*b*) Conflict is understood by us to be a relation of contraries. Naturally we do not talk about truth and falsehood, God and Satan, etc. The contraries to us are incompatibles and opposites. Their main feature is that by reason of their opposition and evenly balanced claims and strength, they are both non-realizable. We have called them "illusions," by which we

> meant that though they are non-realizable we fall into the belief that they are realizable.
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> The terms "falsehood," or "wrongness," or "evil," etc., if they are to be preserved or retained at all, should be understood in the sense of opposites or contraries or illusions. We cannot retain or preserve them in any other sense.
>
> So that instead of saying that conflict occurs between truth and falsehood, we ought to say that it occurs between two falsehoods. We do not see how otherwise we can preserve the prospects of falsehood in the scheme of the universe.

Naturally, ideas of restraint, abstention, etc., all change their significance and value. The old ascetic no doubt abstained and renounced so far as flesh and world were concerned. But his was by no means a case of abstention or renunciation as we mean by these terms. It was not even a consistent procedure. His stand, for instance, for purity and spirituality was claimed to be a dual process. While it was an attempt frankly to materialize the claim of "spirit," it was equally an evidence of severe discipline, which resulted necessarily from that attempt. While the life of spirit was deliberately cultivated, the life of body was literally burnt out. There were two distinct processes happening at the same time: (*a*) inauguration of the life of spirit; (*b*) destruction of the life of flesh, if we follow the traditional claim on behalf of asceticism.

But could the ascetic conceivably embody the life of spirit while he was undergoing the discipline which mortification of flesh implied? If we have to accept the claim that he did undergo suffering as a result of denying and torturing the flesh and world, have we not to believe that he embodied the life of flesh and world? It is inconceivable that the ascetic should have undergone any suffering from the denial of flesh and world if he was remote from them, or indifferent to them. That seems to be perfectly obvious and straightforward.

But can it be held that the ascetic did or could embody the spirit and the flesh simultaneously? On the contrary, if spirit and flesh have to be taken as contraries, it follows that we can embody either the life of spirit or the life of flesh. We never could follow God and worship mammon. It is inconceivable that the ascetic should embody the life of spirit while he represents the life of flesh or cherishes the "world." We have to admit as a matter of course that the ascetic either realized the life of spirit or suffered from the pangs of mortifying the flesh. Either the life of spirit was professed and practised by the ascetic, unmindful of what happened to the life of flesh, or the life of flesh was steadily consumed without any valuation of the life of spirit.

This is the only safe conclusion we are justified in drawing about the meaning of traditional asceticism. Either he was the creator of the life of spirit or he was the consumer or destroyer of the life of flesh. He could not be both at the same time.

But this meaning will be repudiated universally by the clerical and the contemporary position about asceticism.

It is a fact that the ascetic is known to mortify the flesh whenever there is an outcry against the flesh. Asceticism which deliberately sets to work to denounce the flesh is invariably a reaction against the times when the flesh was valued overmuch or even worshipped. And at such times men and women also sincerely and whole-heartedly believe in the life of spirit. Besides, they are so full of faith in the life of spirit that flesh and body literally disappears from their scheme of life. There is no occasion for them to mortify the flesh; the flesh does not exist for them.

To get at the heart of traditional asceticism, we have to keep in view both types of men and women: (*a*) those who mortify the flesh; (*b*) those who are absorbed in the life of spirit.

Our suggestion is that the ascetic who mortifies the flesh does so as a matter of compulsion and not of choice. He is

the product of domination by the type which believes wholly in the life of spirit. He is still identified with the flesh and body and suffers untold suffering in being compelled to deny it. He is truly a convert, and cases of conversion are cases of defeat or conquest. Even when the bleeding ascetic swears that the life of spirit was truth, he is only expressing his beaten mind and demented intellect. He is under the hypnotic influence of the claim which the man of spirit and soul is making.

Here, therefore, is no case of renunciation which implies an acceptance of the life of spirit as a matter of free choice. Here is a case of suppression and domination. The ascetic who mortified the flesh did so at the behest or command of the man or woman for whom the life of spirit and soul was absolute. He did not believe in the life of spirit, exactly as the man or woman who believed in spirit and soul did not suffer from the mortification of flesh and body.

Asceticism or renunciation of the flesh and the world, therefore, meant only a denial or repudiation: it did not imply mortification. The ascetic was the sworn enemy of flesh and world and took pains to eliminate them. He never mortified flesh and body or suffered from the denial or repudiation of the world. The person who suffered from that mortification was the victim of the ascetic and not the ascetic himself. Mortification was only the process by which the life of body was eliminated and destroyed. It was an evidence that the body or flesh had been mortified and eliminated.

If the ascetic of tradition, then, was not called upon to renounce or abstain, it does not follow that there cannot be room for abstention or renunciation. What follows is that the conception of asceticism must change and we can easily bring about that change by replacing the traditional theory of conflict by the theory of competing illusions. It should not be difficult to see that illusions which constitute conflict are bound to call for renunciation or abstention. It is not

possible that a man or woman who is convinced that he or she is under an illusion will not put forth his or her best to abstain from realizing it.

But such abstention cannot be one-sided. If conflict could take place between spirit and flesh, it should be possible to hold that both flesh and spirit would have to be equally renounced, by virtue of their contrariety. Both sides would be in the awkward position where they could not help being influenced by illusion, and at the same time had no alternative but to restrain them deliberately.

There is room for sacrifice and renunciation in human existence if only because illusion is a fact which forms the main constituent of conflict. We cannot truly deal with conflict if we do not deliberately and whole-heartedly practise restraint and sacrifice. The only way by which we can bring conflict to an end is the way of abstention, or asceticism as we may choose to call it. And the peculiarity of this method is that both sides in a conflict are equally under a call to practise it. If conflict is a relation of contrariety which means a clash between two types of illusion, it cannot be concluded without the joint, co-operative effort to destroy both the illusions at the same time. If, for instance, the conflict is a clash between spirit and flesh, freedom and authority, God and mammon, etc., abstention or renunciation will apply to both the terms equally. There can be nothing in either spirit or flesh, God or mammon, etc., which need be considered as not illusory or non-realizable. The clash is not between something absolute and relative, or truth and falsehood, or right and wrong, but between two types of illusion. And it makes no difference whether the constituents of those illusions are formed by such concepts or terms as God, spirit, etc.

So far as this philosophy is concerned, the main feature of an ethical situation does not lie in the terms that constitute a relation but in the nature of the relationship. We consider spirit and flesh, God and mammon, freedom and authority,

etc., as illusory values simply because they appear in a relation of contrariety. If tradition did not come to this conclusion, the reason was that the relation between them appeared to it to be one of contradictories. They had to attach importance, in consequence, to the terms rather than to the relationship between the terms.

It follows that in our scheme of morality there is no such thing as an absolute value, in the sense in which tradition understood it. We do not suggest that God or freedom or spirit, and their opposites, mammon, authority, flesh are standards or values by which we can judge the validity of any claim or experience. They are, to us, but terms of "relation," which is the sole criterion of value. And as relation can appear in the form of either conflict or harmony they are bound to have two different values if it so happens that they do appear in both conflict and harmony. If God or mammon, for instance, becomes a value, the reason is not that they are distinct and unique existents, but that they are related in a specific way. And if it be a fact that they have existed so far in a relation of contrariety, it is inevitable that we must consider them both as illusions. We have, in other words, to resist the temptation to obey either God or mammon, or live the life of freedom or authority. Our sole work with regard to them will lie in practising abstention rigidly and nothing else.

The fact no doubt is that we have not practised abstention so far; we chose instead the apparently more vigorous process of realizing them, of fulfilling their claims. And the conviction arose that we were doing constructive work in the shape of laying the foundation of the universe in terms of freedom or authority. But the fact is that we were all the time under illusion. The total result of our constructive efforts was chaos and confusion. The constructive feature of our activity only consisted in creating the suitable agents to bring about that confusion. Those agents and devices were warfare and persuasion. Perhaps it was only an illusion

to call such a process constructive. We have to be something entirely different from being merely vigorous or energetic to be truly constructive. For vigour and energy, if it is untrammelled or untrained, leads necessarily to destruction, as even the contemporary scenes of social existence will testify.

True morality, like true renunciation, was not known to tradition. We did not know what "value" meant even as we had no idea of true asceticism. By "value" we meant nothing but absolute standard, and that consisted in one or other of the competing categories like God and mammon, spirit and flesh, etc. We did not know that it is the relationship between the terms in each pair that constitutes the value or the sole criterion of judgement in action or speculation. By renunciation we meant renouncing the flesh and the world and the devil, and we did not know that such renunciation was and could be but the result of suppression or domination. To be precise, we should have called by the name of ascetic both the figures of history: (*a*) the figure which abstained from realizing the flesh; (*b*) the figure which abstained from realizing spirit. Both instances were facts of history, although we chose to dignify only the first figure with the pedigree of the ascetic. We did not know that true asceticism was not possible before we had realized that there was such a thing as illusion in life.

Let us now close this review with a brief reference to a distinction that is made between intellectual apprehension and realization.

Both lay and sophisticated minds cheerfully hold that while we may and do actually realize intellectually the validity of a course of action, we do not always succeed in carrying it into practice. It is one thing to follow the logical feature of a proposition, a different thing to carry into practice the course of action which it suggests. In ethics generally a distinction has been made between what we ought to do and what we do actually. We may fully believe that a particular course of action is a duty from which we

should never deviate. And yet in actual practice we may follow the direct opposite of that course. Why we should be in that anomalous condition is another question; but the general belief is that there is a distinction between our capacity to apprehend logically and acting consistently and faithfully. Logic, in consequence, fell into disfavour with the large mass of men and women, and perhaps even those who specialized in the study of logic did not always faithfully worship at her shrine. We are familiar with hair-splitting arguments that tear ideas into shreds. It is well known how the ideas in the course of that process lose all affinity with the practical issues of daily routine. Not that practical life, by deliberately escaping the finesse of thought, realizes any greater value; it only falls into the make-believe that sheer solidity or bulk of an idea is an essential feature of its truth or value. The two processes, which resulted in making values either logically slim or ethically rotund, equally missed the truth or value. The real issue is neither one of simplicity nor volume.

Perhaps the distinction could have been avoided if we had not radically distinguished what we called the intellectual apprehension from the ethical realization. There was indeed no reason to hold that logical apprehension did not imply practical realization. In fact, no logical apprehension was possible without the rejection or disapproval of a logical counter-claim. Here is a case of experience which is complete and unique, although it is a life which perhaps concerns thought more than either emotion or action. If, for instance, we logically apprehend that spirit or idea constitutes the essence of Reality, we proceed at once to demolish materialism or its advocate the materialist. And demolition of the claim of materialism, and its rather disagreeable effect upon the materialist as a direct consequence of the manner in which it takes place, is by no means a piece of intellectual apprehension. There is at least some heat in it which ought not to appear in the intellectual moment, and many more

things may happen in the course of its realization which can by no means be confused with calm or serene contemplation.

But it does not follow that because we have satisfied ourselves that the essence of Reality, for instance, is idea or matter, we should be able to direct the course of the universe or even the course of our actions at every step. It is one thing to direct the course of philosophic tradition, or perhaps, to some extent, the life of the philosopher who has to teach and write books—a different thing to make human society follow that philosophic mandate. And certainly it need not create any surprise if the philosopher finds out that even his own physical and material condition refuses to obey that philosophic inspiration. The explanation is not that the physical or economic need of the philosopher is just an irrational factor which as a matter of accident puts obstacles in the path of immaculate truth. The explanation is that the truth of the philosopher had not potency enough to deal with the physical need as well. It could successfully and quite rightly demolish the rival philosophers but it might be useless beyond the settled calm of the philosopher's academy.

When, for instance, a man or woman realizes intellectually that spirit is the truth or value, this apprehension should be understood in relation to another claim, which is equally intellectual, that matter is the truth or value. So that the moment the logical conviction that spirit is truth or value arises, steps are taken to dispense with the view that matter or flesh is the truth or value. The logical apprehension leads to a specific realization. And if we happen to stop here, we may still get a perfectly consistent universe—the universe in which only those who believed in "spirit" or "reason" lived and breathed peacefully.

If, for instance, we call this moment the moment of asceticism, we should emphasize two points:

(*a*) Realization on the part of the ascetic that spirit is truth, as distinguished from the former conviction that

flesh or matter was truth. Here is a change in the whole personality of the ascetic. He is not a materialist.

(*b*) The ascetic has to be regarded as a man who is identified with spirit. Matter is no longer anywhere on his horizon. There can be no question of mortifying the flesh.

All philosophers periodically attain to the bliss of the perfect life of logical apprehension; and perhaps some of the greatest of them came to believe that it was in such quiet and pure contemplation of truth or value that the height of human perfection was reached. The flesh or body was furthest removed from it.

But the serenity of this contemplative life departs as soon as the complicated issues of the practical life reappear on the scene. As new problems arise, the conviction that spirit is the essence of reality ceases to work. There is an occasion for discovering fresh truth and values. The ascetic, or the philosopher finds that he has entered into a new world where the problems are different and outweigh all previous convictions. The belief that spirit and not flesh is the truth or value literally ceases to exist. And the ascetic of old may even become identified with the flesh and be altogether lost again in the clash between spirit and flesh. He cannot be called the ascetic any longer as his belief in spirit is no longer active.

What has to be noted is that the clash is always between spirit and flesh although the forms of spirit and flesh may and do perpetually change. We never enter into a conflict which does not imply both spirit and flesh. So that what is called intellectual or logical apprehension of spirit as distinguished from flesh is just as much the result of a clash between flesh and spirit as what is known as the practical or economic or emotional experience of human needs. When, for instance, we seem to be failing to preserve our faith in spirit as a result of an economic drive, or some deep-seated, biological urge, here too we are altogether and wholly

involved in the same old conflict between flesh and spirit. And if the flesh or matter or emotion overrules the spirit, it only means that the spirit of old which prevailed over matter or body has now to submit to matter or flesh, which it had at one time overcome. There is a logical apprehension here too, only we are slow to recognize it, precisely because it is not the spirit but flesh that appeared to be logically certain.

Besides it is difficult to see how our logical apprehension could fail to alternate between spirit and flesh. If no conflict ever came to an end, but oscillated between two moments of triumph with their corresponding defeats, it was inevitable that we should be alternately convinced about spirit and flesh. We could never exist outside a conflict between spirit and flesh, nor could we end up a conflict without some logical certainty. We had to be logically certain about either spirit or flesh, as we could not reconcile them or compromise with them by any means.

When, therefore, we talked about "oughtness" in ethics, as distinguished from the disagreeable failure of actual experience, and distinguished between logical certainty or apprehension and the brute or irrational drive, we were not strict enough to take account of the whole truth. We did not distinguish between the different stages of the conflict between spirit and flesh, nor did we take account of the fact that logical apprehension had for its subject-matter both spirit and flesh alternately. We did not realize that what was happening was not a discovery of absolute truth but the alternate survival of either spirit or flesh, as a result of the conflict between them. There was no absolute survival nor was there an absolute suppression. To this day, in literal truth, the same drama is being enacted, and how long it will be on the stage we may not be able to divine.

It will not serve any good purpose, therefore, to suggest that the ascetic was logically certain of the supremacy of the spirit though he was dominated by the brute or irrational

flesh. So long as he was certain of the supremacy of the spirit, he was equally certain of the utter falsehood of the claim of matter and flesh. In such a mood there was no possible chance for flesh to work on him. There could be no occasion for him to restrain or renounce flesh. The faith in spirit was bound to be sufficient evidence that the flesh was dead and would not be resurrected.

But if the same ascetic was found to be struggling hard with brute flesh, that is a sign that he had lost his equipoise and was in the midst of a fresh struggle between spirit and flesh. And in this struggle he was tied up with flesh rather than with spirit, if it be a fact that it was hard for him to mortify flesh. We have to explain his case as a case of suppression or domination. He was totally at the mercy of the man who believed in spirit as supreme and was compelling him against his deep conviction to mortify flesh. The ascetic of this description was a deep believer in flesh.

We shall now go back to our account of the method of voluntary self-discipline which gave rise to this lengthy discussion on asceticism.

Let us recapitulate.

(1) The heart of this method lies in the recognition of the fact and necessity of negation, as such. We do not aim at realizing an end. There is no occasion for achievement or construction of anything positive. Our sole occupation is to negate and to abstain from realizing an end, on the ground that it is an illusion, and therefore non-realizable.

(2) From the beginning to the end of this process the mind is saturated with belief or certainty. There is no question about the illusory character of the end as there is no difficulty in holding that ends that lie in a relation of contrariety are bound to be non-realizable.

(3) The issue that is uppermost is that unless the ends are negated or abstained from we may run into difficulties, the inevitable consequence of mistakes and blunders. So that the mind, in negating the end

which seems to rule it at the moment, is bent on achieving two distinct things:

(*a*) To avoid the two old methods: (1) warfare, (2) persuasion; so that the mistake of trying to realize the end may be avoided.

(*b*) To keep in view the fact that the antagonist or rival is similarly situated. A sense of absolute equality, instead of superiority and inferiority, rules. This means that neither side loses its respect for the other, though they stand as direct opposites. It is to be kept in mind that opposition is between contraries and not contradictories, so that both sides must be evenly balanced and absolutely equal. Unless illusions appear on both sides, it is not possible that they can be either contraries or absolutely equal.

(4) And this is the only true method of asceticism and renunciation, for it is only here that there is voluntary abstention, which means sacrifice, restraint and endurance. To renounce or sacrifice really means to get rid of the influence of illusion, knowing that it is illusion.

(5) And this process of abstention takes place without any reference to any standard or value. There is no ulterior motive or object. If the end is negated as illusion, it does not mean that the mind has a positive end in view by reference to which the illusory character of the end is reached. There is no truth or sign of any standard or value which is absolute. The sole ground of the conviction that the end is illusory lies in the fact that it is in a relation of contrariety to another end. Illusion is an independent and unique phenomenon.

(6) Asceticism or renunciation is taken by the mind, naturally, as not only inevitable and without an alternative, but for that reason an opportunity, a unique way of living or fulfilling the mission of human life. To the mind, to negate an end, to endure the discipline which that process implies, to put forth all the energy at one's disposal to avoid warfare and persuasion, to avoid committing the mistakes and blun-

ders of trying to realize what cannot be realized, is just as good and desirable an end or object as to be able to affirm or construct. Perhaps it may be added that human mind sets the same value on the two distinct processes of living: (*a*) the process which leads to what we call positive expression, or construction, or active function; (*b*) the process which leads to the escape from or avoidance of mistakes and blunders. Popularly speaking, we congratulate ourselves on our success in not making fools of ourselves just as much as when we succeed in behaving like wise men. And evidently the life of endurance commands our respect just as much as the life of fruition or contribution.

(7) Finally, the note that is struck in the process of renunciation is not one of despair but complete assurance. We never forget that the discipline was an end in itself, that it did not mean a contradiction of the true interest of the mind or a possible danger to its identity. Its function or place in the scheme of life is taken as legitimate, valid and necessary, precisely because it does not hold in abeyance the life of harmony that was to follow it, nor is itself obstructed by that life. We enter the path of renunciation with the full knowledge that it will not only keep on expanding to give us sufficient chance to taste the life of sheer negation and endurance, but come to an end at a definite moment, so that the next stage of our journey may begin. Above all, it is full of the joy which comes from the discovery of the true nature of conflict, and that note of true satisfaction never leaves the process from beginning to end. We are instinct with the deep conviction that we did discover the heart of illusion, and could never again fall into the trap of illusion. Renunciation is the culminating point of the life of conflict it brings to an end.

CHAPTER XII

MAYA AND NIRVANA

The stage that follows the conclusion of conflict is the stage of harmony—analysis of harmony—nature of mystical state which is presupposed by both conflict and harmony—the function of image in the state of harmony—distinction between illusion and truth—difference between the stage of conflict and harmony is the difference between illusion and truth—distinction between historical and mystical existence—theory of unusual capacity and efficiency untenable—interpretation of the doctrine of Maya and Nirvana—life of Negation—what we mean by it.

We have stated our theory of the mode in which conflicts should be dealt with if we seriously propose to put an end to them. It was also our contention that this process is bound to supersede the methods of warfare and persuasion sooner or later, precisely because they created conflicts instead of bringing them to a close. We took it for granted that the largest portion of the human race was anxiously looking for a change in the traditional modes of dealing with differences. And if men and women still seem to be in earnest about perpetuating warfare and persuasion, the reason to our mind is that the advocates of these movements happen to be unaware of any but the warlike and persuasive methods.

Still, ours is but a metaphysic with an ethical principle which follows directly from it. Its practical application will have to be worked out before its direct bearing on social existence can be literally seen.

But it does not follow that a theory of Reality can be discarded as academic by virtue of the fact that it has yet to be worked into a scheme of life. There is no such thing as a purely academic theory, except in the relaxed moments of our professors. If we have to discard a theory, it has at

least to be challenged on the strength of theories on which traditional institutions stand. A theory can be combated or contradicted by some other theory. And it is a fact that neither the soldier nor the ascetic, who are the main supporters of warfare and persuasion, stands, in the last analysis, on anything but a theory or metaphysic.

A practical scheme has no meaning apart from the theory on which it is necessarily based. Even a faith which refuses to be formulated by a theory and which may even be capricious enough to override thought builds its practical schemes on thought. As the critic long ago pointed out, one may claim the aid of nothing but miracles to buttress the rampart of the divine home, but one cannot introduce miracles into the economy of daily life and escape disaster. The compromise that was effected between miracles and rational thought by all institutions which believed in miracles was inevitable. And this compromise has worked to this day simply because we could not devise a consistent theory of Reality.

The theory or metaphysic is the basis of all life that is supposed to achieve results and make for the fulfilment of human mission. It is primary and fundamental in its importance, and if it is sound and consistent it is bound to evolve into a practical scheme sooner or later.

If we have suggested a metaphysic, we can legitimately claim that we have suggested a basis for practical schemes.

And if we proceed to put an end to conflict by practising voluntary and mutual self-discipline, we shall not only put an end to conflict but prepare the way for the next stage in the cosmic process. And that stage is the stage of harmony. With the final conclusion of all conflict, we are bound to enter on a new phase of life in which nothing but harmony among the centres, which have hitherto competed and clashed, can take place. And the result that is sure to follow from their joint co-operative activities is bound to be different from what it was in the period of conflict in either of its stages.

We have discussed the nature of harmony, and that at great length. What we have to repeat is that the stage of harmony cannot appear so long as there is a single instance of conflict still surviving. We have no hesitation in claiming that the universe, or any section of it—not excluding the human section—cannot enter on the stage of harmony before it has completely worked out every conceivable form of conflict.

And the result of that harmony must be unity, as it is unity that alone can represent the realization of common purpose, the *sine qua non* of organic life. If harmony must mean that the different centres taking part in it must imply a common purpose, and if different centres can only function to realize that purpose, there must be a stage to represent the realization of that purpose. Harmony without that realization has no meaning, and as the common purpose is bound to be monistic and singular, the realization is bound to be a unity.

Besides, it will have all the features of individuality. It cannot be repeated too often that the historical is bound up with the mystical, whether we take it in the form in which it appears in conflict or in its opposite form of harmony. The empiricist, who did not see this truth, was quite wide of the mark when he emphasized the particular or the present at the expense of the past and future, or the unity, or non-historical.

But there is no doubt a distinction between the mystical presence which conflict implies and the mystical reality which is presupposed by harmony. As the universe starts with conflict, the mystical entity which is presupposed by conflict is bound to be non-historical. There is no point in suggesting that it is a historical event. The only historical evidence about mystical entity could be but an image or concept which the mind in destroying or defending it is bound to form about it.

It is inconceivable that we can verify the historical character of anything that we ever made an effort to defend.

It is by no means exaggerating the truth to argue that the subject-matter of any defence cannot exist as a fact when the defence on its behalf is set up or made. One has to distinguish between the fact of its existence and the fact of its defence.

And if we have to believe that we never took part in anything but conflict, we have equally to believe that we never had the chance of verifying the subject-matter of our defence. All the positive facts in our life consisted in the organization of defence or attack on it. Literally, we had nothing else but what we call engines of warfare or devices of persuasion. Whether it was a God or a Prophet or home or art that we were defending or destroying, the historical fact was altogether nothing but a defence of or an attack on them, which, therefore, had to make of the image or concept of the God or Prophet, etc., the pivot on which alone it could move or act. The image or concept was the foundation on which all historical life was based. What the empiricist called the sensum or sensation refers to it necessarily, as otherwise a sensation which is but a function either to defend or destroy is altogether inconceivable.

Besides, as the universe started with image which referred to a unity which was never a historical fact, it never ceased to continue in that stage, as it never went out of the stage of conflict. There has been nothing but a steady evolution of images to feed the corresponding evolution in conflict. Hitherto we have been evolving images of our Gods, cultures and homes, and not the actual realities. It is literally true that we never yet became actually divine, but only fought or persuaded hard to maintain or destroy a belief or faith in Divinity.

But the theory of image or the mystical claim about the Reality that it refers to may easily appear to be unusual and fantastic, even though its evidence may be logically perfect. One may take it as a repetition of the old religious mysteries, ingeniously put. It might be worth while, therefore, to state

the theory once again in terms of actual facts and concrete history.

The main ground of the theory is that a conflict can never appear except in the form of a defence or attack. The two sides in a conflict must be alternatively attacking or defending one another.

We can easily conceive of a state where, instead of attack and defence, an effort to achieve a common object takes place. But no such effort, whose sole object is to achieve an object, is conceivable in a relation of conflict. The two relations of conflict and harmony are diametrically opposed to one another. If achievement alone can take place in a state of harmony, what happens in a state of conflict must be sheer frustration. There is all the difference between achievement of a purpose and frustration of it.

The question, therefore, arises, can there be frustration of purpose except as the result of a process of attack or defence?

It is apparent that we must be trying to realize an object whether we are in conflict or harmony. The term "function," or "activity," has no meaning except in relation to some end in view. An endless activity was the dream of those who tried to exercise indeterminate choice, like our old friend the Ass of Buridan; and we all know what came of that desperate procedure.

It is equally clear that while in harmony the purpose is bound to be common, in conflict the competing sides are bound to have contrary ends. Similarly, while in harmony the collective efforts are bound to lead to realization, nothing but frustration can take place in conflict.

But is that all by which we can distinguish the cases of harmony and conflict? Does conflict simply mean that we fail to realize our object, while in harmony we cannot help realizing the end? Is there no other way of explaining the difference?

The main and essential difference lies in the fact that

while in harmony we act and function to produce something which is not yet, in conflict we act and function to preserve or destroy what is already believed to be a fact. If the total result of conflict has to be loss, it has to take the form of functions which are known as attack and defence. And the result of conflict has to be loss, as what we aim at in conflict is not the creation of value. A conflict cannot possibly start unless there is a value as an article of faith. It is harmony and not conflict that falls due if the mind is in confusion. Apparently confusion is the result of conflict and not its presupposition. Attack or defence of value must be the characteristic feature of conflict as distinguished from its production or creation. And in no other case than harmony can the mind be actuated by a desire to produce or create values. Creation of value take place unerringly as it falls due. We can either produce or not produce at all. There is no such thing as failure to produce or create a value; there can be only either a creation of value which is fresh and new, or an attack on or defence of a value which was an article of faith.

What we call failure is really another name for defeat, and it is always associated with victory or success. It is, therefore, a very different thing from failure to produce a value, which never takes place.

We do not, to talk in the language of the schools, begin as the sceptic; we begin as the dogmatist.

And beginning, as such, has to imply either illusion or confusion. And it makes no difference whether we are in illusion or confusion, we have to act vigorously in both cases. The result of the vigorous action is either loss and confusion or realization and fulfilment. It is only illusory values that can be lost, even as true ends must necessarily be realized.

No activity, again, has so far been able to escape either the one or the other of the illusions, e.g. Infinite and Finite, Freedom and Authority, etc. We did our best either to

destroy Freedom and Authority or to preserve them. It can never be said of human history that it was without a dogmatic belief in either the one or the other of the competing illusions.

And if we are prepared to believe that conflict is bound to imply illusions which compete with one another, it follows necessarily that the mind has to believe in two things:

(*a*) The idea of the non-historical state or existence of value.
(*b*) The reality of image or concept as the only medium through which that value can appear before the mind.

If the value or ideal in question was there, existent as fact, there would be no occasion for making an effort either to defend it or destroy it. If it exists it necessarily functions as it is. There is all the difference between a state of realization and the function to produce that state. Historically, we function either to produce that state or to defend or destroy it. History stages only functions whose one object is to create or attack or defend. It makes no provision for the state of realization.

The value, therefore, which forms the subject-matter of conflict may be supposed to be non-historical in its character. And yet the mind has to believe in its previous existence if it has to defend or destroy it. And what could be the non-historical and indisputable state of value unless it were the mystical pure and simple? If it is inconceivable that the mind should doubt the reality, while it was called upon either to defend or to destroy it, can it be supposed that the mind would call it anything but mystical?

The necessity of defence and attack alone was an evidence that it was non-existent as a historical fact. And yet attack or defence implied that it was a fact and not fiction. Could it then possibly be that it was not mystical by nature?

Besides, the belief in it was bound to be very much more than mere sentiment or animal faith about its value; it had

to be sufficiently concrete and historical if it was to provide the subject-matter for attack and defence. It was bound to be either Freedom or Authority, Infinite or Finite, etc. Would it not be perfectly legitimate, therefore, to claim that the belief must necessarily take the shape of an image or concept which referred to a mystical fact? If the value can no longer appear as a historical fact, and if, further, it had to be necessarily made the subject-matter for a historical act—attack and defence, the mind inevitably had to be in possession of an image or concept about the values.

And it makes no difference if we have to draw the further conclusion that human history till to-day had nothing but illusion and images to deal with, so far as human values are concerned. Whether we consider the spiritual or secular values, we have to believe that our Gods or ideals were all but images which we believed as a matter of sheer illusion to be facts. If we went to war with confidence, and practised the method of persuasion with humility, all that vigorous or restrained activity was possible precisely because we believed in images which as a matter of sheer illusion referred to realities. There was nothing in our history which could be called by any other name than that of illusion or pure image, so far as the reality of our beliefs is concerned.

And yet we have no reason whatsoever to suggest that all this intense experience of human history was a waste, or meaningless episode. There is no reason to hold that its absence would have made no difference to the human race or the universe, or to anything which reality might essentially imply. If by any chance the universe did skip the period of warfare and persuasion it would have lost its right to existence altogether. Illusions may not be what we call truths: they are not; but they are just as real and valuable as truths. We live neither better nor worse when we are in the grip of illusions than when we are in the hand of truth. The experiences which they respectively produce

are equally valuable. It would literally shock the human mind to be told that its long history, in which it put forth its best and went through untold sacrifice, had no value whatsoever. There is not a man or woman living who would not claim for human history the highest that anyone ever conceived.

The main issue does not lie in the distinction between illusion and truth; it lies in the sanctity and validity of life itself. In deciding what is valuable and what is not, we have to go to the nature of life or reality, we have to discover its diverse forms. If the distinction between illusion and truth has any meaning, the secret of that is to be found in the fact of their producing different values. If truth had not the potency to stage a specific form of value there would be no point in truth. We might have discarded it as meaningless waste. And if we do not discard illusion as waste, the reason is that it produces a kind of value which is beyond the capcity of truth to produce. What counts above everything else is fact and what distinguishes a fact is inevitability. If the notion of value is to be rightly understood, its significance has to be sought in the heart of fact. That is value which is inevitable and indispensable, without which neither the absolute nor the relative form of reality could be formulated or worked out. The secret of inevitability lies in its exclusiveness, or ruthless suppression of alternatives. There can never be a complaint or doubt in the presence of the inevitable. It is the one thing which ought to stimulate desire and constitute faith.

Besides, as conflicts are bound to be concluded in due course, followed by harmony, illusions can never lead to what the human mind dreaded as extinction. There can never be negation or contradiction, the inevitable consequence of which is extinction. The worst that happens in conflict and as a result of honest and vigorous attempt to materialize illusions is failure and frustration. The loss or failure no doubt has about it what we call the "grim" and

"terrific" in the shape of severe pain and discipline. There is not a single creature on earth who has not had the chance of realizing what this grim experience means.

But it will be pure sentimentalism to lament over that grim experience as if it meant the end or extinction of all that the human mind ever valued. Even in death, which so far has spelt nothing but mystery to the human mind, there is no claim that we should lament the loss for ever. Not only do we recover from its pangs under the benign guidance of nature but we clearly see as time passes that there was no point in the survival of the life that was gone. All such gruesome events in human history, whether on large, racial planes or in the circumspect sphere of personal existence, sooner or later appear to the human mind in their true proportion. And the deposit of truth which the perpetual flow of this grim experience leaves behind is that life gives men and women a chance to suffer, to undergo pain and endurance. When we look back to what appeared to be the darkest periods of our life, they appear to be literally episodes in which different actors staged a play and then disappeared. Not even history is expected to keep the memory of that drama alive. If the actors and their performance disappear, their history, which is another drama, is bound to disappear too. In course of time even the archaeologist will be like the skeleton which he takes so much pains to dig out from the buried past.

Without a doubt we live on and on and do not ever get shut out from the universe process. We reappear as a matter of course time after time with new parts to play and new experiences to go through. Extinction never was a fact, whether of the universe or of the multitudinous individual centres which constituted it. The centres, the main constituents of the universe, have been living perpetually through the long centuries and will live for ever.

If the image, then, in conflict is illusory and leads necessarily to failure or frustration, the image in harmony refers

to truth and is followed by inevitable realization. And this happens precisely because harmony implies an organic and co-operative relationship among the centres instead of conflict or opposition. The image in harmony refers to the future, not the past; and the functions that seek to realize it have no meaning apart from realizing the common purpose collectively. Realization is inevitable, and truth means realization and nothing else.

We took the case of an orchestral performance to illustrate the case of harmony. The conductor, to us, appeared to hold the image of music before his mind, and his chief function consisted in conveying it to the different instrumentalists.

It was no part of our suggestion that he represented a true instance of harmony. We chose his case with a view to illustrate an instance of harmony. What actually happens in an orchestral performance perhaps we ought to leave to the musicians to decide. If we cannot believe that a case of true harmony ever was a fact, orchestral performance cannot be an exception to that fact. We have to believe that any music that any orchestral performance ever created must have had its contrary challenging it. A successful performance, according to our theory, is like a victory on the field of battle. The rise of the music is like the appearance of a new God or a new art or a new culture. It rises as a God or culture rises and falls exactly as the Gods and cultures do. The rise and fall are inevitable and they do not constitute anything but the alternate phases of a conflict.

But the form of an orchestral performance may well serve as an illustration of a case of harmony. If we could assume that the music that an actual performance creates did not stand in a definite relation to some other music which was its direct contrary, we could cite any instance of it as a case of harmony. In harmony the main theme appears in the common purpose which is bound to take the shape of an

image which refers to the future realization. The conductor in the orchestral performance has all the appearance of that "image" or "common purpose" to which all the instrumentalists refer. It is another story if the conductor, in creating a new music, is suppressing another music which has a different message to give.

If the image in harmony refers to the future and leads to realization, what may be called creation of a God or culture or art in the universe process can occur only when the stage of harmony is due. The God or culture that we dealt with in conflict was not and could not have been a historical fact.

All that we claimed as God and believed to be art and culture was constituted wholly by images. We built, painted and sang, but our architecture, painting and music were nothing but sheer efforts of attack and defence. They were literally modes of attack and defence. The whole of human civilisation was but a fruitless preliminary to establish unity, peace and the joy of beauty.

What this means fully will appear to us if we analyse the human claims about God, culture and art that have been steadily made. Except the atheist, sceptic and perhaps the empiricist, no one ever believed that God was not a fact of existence, with whom we are either somehow historically bound up or, if we are fortunate enough, hold communion. The largest section of the human race survived the overwhelming strain of life by nothing so much as faith in the divine presence. And nobody, whether among the artists or the lay folk, ever did think that the accumulated treasure of centuries was not the soul of beauty or art incarnate. When music moved us, as if we were but a leaf or twig of a tree in the firm grip of a gale, or when beauty glowed in the still or moving folds of paint or wood or stone, or when the rhythms of poetic cadence blew fresh wind in the open sky, untouched by age or human hand, nobody was so dense as not to think that all this sprang from the heart of reality and fact. We all did believe that we were in the vicinity of

God, beauty and all that made life stable and serene. There never was any doubt or even momentary suspicion that nowhere in all these vast accumulations of man was there a trace of Divinity, beauty, and peace. No one suspected that the mystic, the poet and the artist never had a chance yet to reach up to the height from the top of which alone they could sight the vision. What they called the vision was not the true vision, not even a facsimile of it. There was neither God nor beauty nor peace in it, nor even the true image of these. Instead, there was an illusion which like the mirage has through centuries stimulated man's curiosity and thought, and invariably stranded him on the limitless shore of sand. Literally, they egged us on to a fight which either cost us heavily or filled us with false hopes by an illusive victory.

If this philosophy is at all sound, we are within sight of the end of the long journey across the limitless stretch of sand. We have reason to expect that there will be an end of the era of illusion, sooner or later. And the age of harmony that will fall due after that will usher in the God of peace and unity, and a culture and art which can do honour to such a God, and truly initiate the ceremony or ritual of his worship.

The difference, therefore, between the two stages is nothing more nor less than the difference between illusion and truth. If nothing did or could happen in the stage of conflict which was not determined by illusion, nothing can or does happen in harmony which will not be determined by truth. And what that precisely means will be clear if we remember that—unlike conflict, which staged the clash of images, whether of Divinity, beauty or peace, and ended in a frustration of them—harmony which will function to realize the common goal or objective of Divinity, beauty and peace will truly succeed in materializing the actual and concrete presence of God and beauty and peace. The relative world in consequence will actually embody the divine moment and the

moment of beauty and peace. The universe will literally become divine, beautiful and peaceful.

There will necessarily be a difference between the worship, art and culture of the age of conflict and the worship, art and culture of the age of harmony. While the former never appeared or existed except for the purpose of staging a clash—the inevitable result of which was either a victory or defeat of worships, cultures and arts, or a confusion in which none survived—the latter will exist in the form of collective efforts to offer worship, build art, or establish culture. Instead of diverse arts, worships and cultures clashing with one another, either as contradictories or as degrees of truth, there will be diverse functions to perform the ritual of worship, to create beauty and establish peace.

And what should be noted with care is that it is not worship or culture or art that will be the end or goal of harmony. They will constitute only functions and activities whose end or goal will lie in the realization of Divinity, beauty, and peace.

And this is what is meant by the distinction that we have drawn between the historical and mystical existence. As in conflict no stage could follow the stage of functions which took the shape of warfare and persuasion, in harmony, a definite stage will follow to mark the moment of realization. And that must be called mystical because it is a stage of unity, individuality and personality. It is a stage which follows the stage of multiplicity and function, or the stage which we call history. Unlike conflict, which runs on the assumption that there was a mystical stage in the past which formed the subject-matter of attack or defence, harmony will place the mystical stage in the future. In both cases, the historical and mystical will play a part, but while in conflict there will never be the actual presence of the mystical but only the illusory imagination of it, in harmony the mystical state will not only appear as an image or concept to serve as a common purpose or goal of the collective activities, but actually exist as a realized state.

And as regards the relation between the historical or mystical state or illusion and truth, there is nothing to choose between them from the point of view of value. Both are inevitable and indispensable phases or stages of the relative world. We can no more do without the stage of conflict than we can do with the stage of harmony alone.

To be precise, conflict gives a special opportunity to man for living the life of endurance and uncomplaining calm. Even the period of its ruthless efforts for sheer destruction is not less significant from the point of view of sacrifice, discipline and untold suffering. Here is a chance for the human individual to bear on his shoulders the weight, as it were, of the whole universe. This is true atonement if anything is. Human mind, choosing to pass through the crucible of fire, achieved a feat which is possible only to the white heat of ascetic calm. In this display of pure strength there is not even the stray desire to reach a distant goal. Perhaps the highest achievement of man so far lay in his free choice of the life of discipline for its own sake.

The historical and mystical states, therefore, are perfectly even from the point of view of value. We never had a moment in the long life of conflict in which we wasted or destroyed values. We have been steadily destroying illusions. Is it possible to draw a line between destroying illusions and creating truths, from the point of view of value? And can we help being thankful for illusions, if only because they gave us the unusual chance of destroying them?

It is the fact of discipline, the feat of endurance, the stoic fortitude and uncomplaining calm, that is the point at issue. The point is not why we had to go through the stage of illusion. If the human mind could be supposed never to have valued anything but joy and happiness, the issue would be different. There would be no defence of illusions if discipline were irrational and for ever under a ban. But it is not discipline but extinction that was under a ban. Human mind set its face deliberately against real death or

extinction but it never discarded discipline from its way of life. The bohemian dream, or the heaven which is lit up with perpetual joy, was but an attempt to adjust a balance. There was nothing in it to dispute the fact that life on earth necessarily staged the drama of discipline.

But the question when exactly the stage of harmony will begin or the stage of conflict come to its end is another issue. We can only conclude that as the method of bringing conflict to an end has been found, conflict is bound to come to an end. We can no longer go on dealing with conflict by the traditional modes of warfare and persuasion: we have to change those methods for the method of voluntary self-discipline.

Besides, as we have discovered a solution of the outstanding problems which the categories so far created, there is no reason why we should not hold that the stage of harmony is bound to follow. If we can assure ourselves that both Infinite and Finite, Freedom and Authority, etc., can be consistently held and realized, it follows that the next stage must mean an attempt to realize them. There is ample evidence in this metaphysic to guarantee the fulfilment of both ends: (*a*) completion of conflict; (*b*) staging of harmony.

There are two interesting issues, however, which have a bearing on the precise moment of the origin or appearance of harmony:

(*a*) Does the discovery of the mode or method of dealing with conflict with a view to bring it to an end imply that those who are responsible for this discovery may be credited to have brought their own conflicts to an end?

(*b*) Does it follow that because the conflict among the outstanding categories has been solved by this philosophy, those who have been responsible for this philosophy may be supposed to have begun the stage of harmony?

It might be interesting to add that it is some such discoveries in human history that invariably gave rise to the claim to outstanding genius.

We did not hesitate to call those who gave us a new conception of Divinity or a new code of morals perfect, as if they were within easy reach of Divinity. According to some theorists, all the Gods of human history came out of this exuberant mood of appreciation which original discoveries by the human mind invariably stimulated. In any case, we did not hesitate in the past to draw a line between such men and the rest of the community who were supposed to live on the blessings which these men by their outstanding genius shed around them.

It would be a poor defence of this philosophy if we, too, following tradition craved for the safe eminence of perfect being or outstanding genius, on the strength of a discovery which we cannot conscientiously dismiss as imaginary. Nothing else could shatter the pretence of our theory of absolute equality than such a sudden accession to eminence. If we claimed without any hesitation that no individual centre whatever its status or contribution could be greater or smaller, even by a hair's breadth, than any other centre, it would be a misfortune if we neutralized that claim by a deliberate admission of a graduation among them. We cannot take such a suicidal step.

What then is the significance of the fact that this philosophy is suggesting a fresh mode or method of dealing with differences? What does this originality in discovery imply as to the nature or character of the mind that may be credited with it?

The issue is whether the mind which was responsible for this discovery must be taken necessarily as unusual and extraordinary. And it is important simply because a long tradition was reared in human history on the basis of a distinction between minds which made fresh discoveries and those which were supposed to benefit by them. And if it has a special importance for us, the reason for that is that we have established to our satisfaction the theory of absolute equality as a universal law.

The answer to the issue is that even if we have to admit the fact of fresh discoveries, such an admission need not imply the fact of inequality. Those who discover a fresh theory are no more gifted or efficient than those who benefit by the discovery.

And the main evidence for that position is that those who accept the fruit of that discovery are not merely recipients of a theory as a gift or means of living or a blessing. There is not a moment when all the centres in the community are not actively contributing towards its preservation and growth. Their contributions may be different but they are all equally indispensable.

The discovery that we have made belongs to or is in the line of a school of thought which is by no means unfamiliar to us. If we remember that the history of speculation definitely harboured not only the dogmatists who fought and clashed with opposite theories, but also the critic and sceptic who made a review of them, it should be perfectly easy to classify the status or character of our own position. We descend apparently from the long line of critics and sceptics who reviewed the contributions of the dogmatists or the originators of theories and practices which corresponded to them. It has been our aim and object, to begin with, to pass the whole of speculative achievement under review, exactly in the way in which the critics and sceptics of our tradition used to do. There is nothing original or unusual in our achievement, so far as the function of reviewing is concerned. And if we did not think it necessary to claim for the critic and sceptic any merit or value which was superior to that of the dogmatist, there is no reason why a departure should be suddenly made on our behalf.

But we do not suggest that our position can be equated with that of the sceptic and critic of tradition. The fact is that although we started our enquiry with a review of both sceptics and dogmatists, the conclusion that we arrived at practically eliminated the distinction between them. We

came to hold at the end of the enquiry that while the dogmatist stood for Absolute Reality, the sceptic stood for the Negative. Both of them had a definite position to formulate which the sceptic of tradition did not suggest.

We then proceeded to formulate a theory which made provision for both the dogmatist and the sceptic of tradition, by showing how Reality and its contrary, the Negative, were equally intelligible and necessary. This was evidently not done by the sceptic of tradition. There is a clear difference between us and the sceptic of tradition. But can this departure from the traditional achievement by the sceptic be taken as a piece of original thinking which should be credited necessarily with unusual and extraordinary efficiency?

Evidently not; and the reason is that such a discovery is only a sign that a change in the sceptical or critical function, which was more cosmic than a personal affair, had fallen due. The sceptic and critic as distinguished from the dogmatist had to suggest a view of Reality which was calculated to inaugurate a fresh stage in the universe process, by the inherent necessity of that process. There was nothing in this suggestion as an event which could be claimed either as an isolated creation or as indeterminate and free. It must have taken place by the same law of inevitability as did all the events or processes which preceded it. If it was not unusual or extraordinary for the universe to begin in a state of conflict and carry on the process of creating ever-varied conflicts till to-day, it could not be unusual for it to undergo a definite change in that process. There is no reason why the centres which happened to be associated with that change should be credited with any unusual efficiency.

The discovery simply means that the stage of conflict in its primary stage is nearing its end; it means that from now onwards two distinct processes will rule the universe instead of one: (*a*) the process of creating conflict; (*b*) the process of concluding or finishing conflicts. If from the

beginning of the universe till to-day nothing but the primary stage seems to have prevailed, there will be a steady decrease in the instances of that stage, as the universe gradually nears its end. And this decrease in the creation of conflict will occur side by side with a steady increase in the instances in which conflicts will be put an end to. The mathematician could easily form a graphic or diagrammatic conception of this simultaneous increase and decrease in the evolution and elimination of conflict. And this change in the career of the primary or secondary phases of conflict will be easily understood if we keep in mind the determinate and discontinuous character of conflict. If conflict has to begin and end, its phases too must have a bounded career. And the precise nature of their birth and death as we have formulated it is directly foreshadowed by the fact that while the world, or a good portion of it, seems to be steeped in the all-absorbing function of creating conflicts, at least in some corner of it the function of concluding and finishing conflicts has been definitely foreshadowed. If both these facts are seriously considered, the decline in the evolution of conflict cannot but coincide with the steady rise of the conclusion of conflict. This is the only way in which the two processes can change as the discontinuous universe gradually moves on to its fixed terminus.

It follows, therefore, that the individual centres which constitute the universe will all take part in the fulfilment or completion of both the processes. If it is a fact that some centres in carrying on the traditional function of the sceptic and critic formulated the process of completing conflict, it does not follow that they will be only concluding conflicts and not evolving them in the future. The main issue is not which centre will evolve conflicts and which will put an end to them. The main issue is whether the universe, after the discovery of the process of concluding conflicts will only conclude conflicts or both evolve and conclude conflicts. Our answer is that it will both evolve and conclude con-

flicts, and in the way we have already mentioned. The real importance attaches to the processes themselves, and not to the history or career of the individual centres. They have to take part with absolute equality in realizing both processes.

The issue of unusual efficiency, therefore, is but a myth; if it played such an important part in the scheme of the universe, the secret of that lay exactly in its mythical or illusory character. In so far as illusion, in the nature of things, had to play a part in the Universe-process the doctrine of inequality had to be believed in. There is no reason to keep it alive a moment too long if it be a fact that we have truly known that it was a myth or an illusion.

What we should put in its place as an article of faith is the truth, while steadily practising the method of putting an end to conflict; for it is the cessation of conflict that alone can establish or inaugurate the reign of truth. In fact the stage which we expect is due, now that we have discovered the true nature of conflict, is just the stage when nothing but a conclusion of conflict will steadily occur. And we might try and give a little further account of that stage, keeping in view the record of the stage it is supposed to supersede.

Both are stages of conflict and naturally illusion plays a part in both. But there is a difference in the ways in which the two stages illustrate the function of illusion. In the stage which evolved and created conflicts, illusion is taken as truth. When, for instance, the different categories such as Infinite, Finite, Freedom, Authority, etc., appeared to the human mind, each was supposed to be the absolute truth; and what happened as a direct result of that supposition the history of the human race has vividly recorded. It is difficult to distinguish between such a supposition and the faith of the innocent mind when it interprets natural events in terms of divine interference. Here is a case of the full operation of illusion which overpowers the human mind and makes it act in truly insane ways.

But the second stage reverses the process; in it, it is the human mind which overpowers illusion by resisting its fascination. The illusion stands revealed in its true colours and the whole issue is one of putting an end to the conflict which the illusions created. The primary stage of illusion is comparable to the stage of what we call delirium, while the secondary stage is comparable to the stage of diagnosis and treatment. Neither the physician nor the patient in the first stage can help being delirious with hallucinations covering the entire field of their mental horizon. The second stage, on the contrary, relieves the physician of his confusion and he makes a successful diagnosis. And as a result of that change the patient cheerfully submits to a treatment with the full faith that it will cure him. We can no more escape delirium than we can avoid diagnosis and recovery.

But if the delirium of conflict has come to an end, what should be the nature of the treatment that is sure to follow? The treatment will deliberately set aside the methods of warfare and persuasion and introduce in their places the method of negation and abstention, as we have already described. We have to negate both the Infinite and Finite, Freedom and Authority, etc., of tradition. The process or function that will claim all our attention is the process of negation and abstention pure and simple. The stage of concluding conflicts is not the stage of achieving positive results. It is wholly the period of resisting false desires and restraining false expectations. It comes after the long experiment of trying to realize them by warfare and persuasion. There is no room for any more positive attempt to carry them into practice. We can only put an end to the conflicts which false hopes and illusive desires mercilessly created for us.

And the negative stage which is wholly devoted to abstention or renunciation comes between the stage where we made efforts to achieve positive results and failed, and the stage of harmony, where it will be our inevitable aim and effort to

realize positive ends which can never fail. There are three distinct stages instead of two in human efforts dealing with human objectives:

(*a*) The stage where objectives are sought to be realized with the false belief that they are truths and can be realized, and failure is bound to result.
(*b*) The stage in which the objectives, though they appear as truths, are recognized as illusions, and all the efforts are devoted to abstention from realizing them. The illusions are overcome.
(*c*) The stage in which the objectives are expected to appear as common end or purpose and they are sure to be realized to the full.

We have already suggested that when the Vedantist talked about Maya he might be supposed to have simply meant that illusion played a part in the scheme of the universe, just as much as truth. At any rate this is the interpretation that we should like to put on the doctrine of Maya. In any case his claim that illusion is a fact cannot be disputed; and it is immaterial to us whether his claim that the world is nothing but Maya or illusion too can be defended. It cannot be defended.

Like the doctrine of Maya there is another tradition in our ancestral history which may be justified or confirmed by our claim that there is such a thing as a stage of negation, pure and simple, in the human or the world scheme. That tradition descended from the teaching of Gautama Buddha and is well known as Nirvana. Like Maya the theory of Nirvana has many interpretations; we do not propose to discuss either of these theories historically or as a scholar is supposed to do. Frankly, we have not the necessary scholarship. But if Nirvana is interpreted as some form of negation of life—there is a considerable opinion that it is negation—it may be compared to what we have suggested as the period of Negation. If we put the case of Buddha in the usual form and claim that Nirvana meant the elimination

of the desires which formed the source of all the struggle of human life, by the practice of a strict code of ethics, the whole conception of Nirvana becomes perfectly clear in the light of what we have said about abstention from illusion. If there is bound to be a stage when the desires will necessarily appear as illusions, what else could we do with regard to them but to resist their claim to realization? The issue here is one of negation or abstention, pure and simple, and if by any chance the whole of the universe process were exhausted at this stage, Nirvana would necessarily be the last event and act. There could be no positive realization whatsoever.

But all this is not an attempt to interpret Buddhism. It is a suggestion to indicate a new line of defence of this theory of Nirvana, and obviously the philosophy which suggests that defence does not accept either Maya or Nirvana as the exclusive feature of the universe. If illusion forms a feature of the universe, it is not the only feature of it. Truth plays equally a part, as the period of harmony will testify. Similarly, the same feature will dispute the claim that Nirvana is the final goal of the universe.

It cannot, however, be forgotten that the period we have so far gone through represented nothing but illusion and the period into which we are going to enter will represent nothing but Nirvana. We attach, therefore, supreme significance to our ancestral suggestions.

But in what precise form would the period of Negation begin? If it is in direct line with the sceptical tradition, in what way exactly would it differ from the method and technique of traditional scepticism?

The difference will lie in the fact that the method of negation will not merely prove that the competing categories are incompatible but frankly appeal for a change on the basis of some positive solution. The sceptic of tradition did not go beyond indicating the fact that the competing categories, such as Infinite and Finite, Freedom and

Authority, etc., mutually contradicted one another. And if there was a positive claim it meant that the Negative rather than Reality was there. There was no defence against the proof of incompatibility from the dogmatists although the positive conclusion of the sceptic did not carry weight with them. And so it happened that the categories came to be reinterpreted and fresh conflicts arose which ultimately resulted in the same sceptical conclusion.

Unlike this sceptical procedure, the method of negation that we are suggesting will uphold a positive view about the competing categories. This view will prove that the categories if they are reinterpreted can be proved to be compatible. So that there could be no occasion for starting the conflict on the old incompatible plane over again. If Infinite and Finite, or Freedom and Authority can be equally realized, it follows necessarily that their old interpretation which created incompatibility will have to be abandoned.

In fact, the immediate issue will lie wholly in the necessity of abandoning them straight away. We have to prepare ourselves for the stage of harmony where it will be our chief function to realize both Freedom and Authority and Infinite and Finite, etc. There is bound to be this stage of preparation. It will mean abstaining from realizing desires which we have just discovered to be sheer illusion. There is a difference between discovering an illusion and abstaining from it. The discovery follows from two distinct facts: (*a*) that Freedom and Authority, Infinite and Finite, etc., are compatible; (*b*) that the relation of conflict is a relation of contrariety. Naturally, what falls due immediately is not the realization of Freedom and Authority, or Infinite and Finite, but a conclusion of the conflict by abstaining from realizing the illusions about them. The actual realization cannot fall due so long as new ends or purposes have not appeared on the scene. We have to distinguish between the proof that the categories are compatible and the existence of the actual forms in which the categories will appear

for concrete realization. We shall soon see what all this means.

And so long as the conflicts have not been concluded by abstention or restraint, the forms of the realizable categories will not come into existence. So long, in other words, as we have not like a true sceptic realized that the competing Gods, arts and cultures are all equally illusory and done with them, we cannot expect to enter the era of harmony which alone can create beauty, peace and unity.

And yet the abandonment of what we cherished as Divinity, beauty, and peace need by no means be an altogether unusual and strange procedure. We have been as a matter of history demolishing Gods, works of art and institutions for peace ever since we lived as social beings under the shelter of what we call civilization. How many Gods, arts and cultures with the corresponding social orders have been buried under earth or burnt out of existence, it is not even possible for us to calculate. Even as we live, in the twentieth century, exactly the same identical process is being vigorously carried on. No God is safe, not even the God of the Christians or of the Semitic faith. And curiously enough, there have been signs of a revival of the old Gods whom we call by the name of Pagan in the very centre from which they were routed by the Christian God.

Like the Gods, the arts and cultures that have been equally mercilessly done to death are innumerable. No art or culture could, in spite of its rare beauty or solidarity, escape demolition and destruction at the hands of its rival or competitor. There never was a universal appeal in them. Nothing indeed is a more familiar feature of human history than the destruction and demolition of arts and cultures, as if they were literally made for nothing else.

The question of negation and abandonment, therefore, whether of Gods or arts or cultures, need not be a very difficult problem to solve.

But the negation or abandonment that the stage of

renunciation will bring about is sure to be different from the destruction which took place in tradition. It will most certainly not be a negation of a God or art or culture in the interest of another God or art or culture; it will be a negation of all the Gods, cultures and arts at the same time. As if the Gods, arts and cultures that clashed and created would of their own accord cheerfully leave the temples or academies where they ruled. The method of negation is not the method of warfare or persuasion. It is the method of voluntary and mutual self-discipline which marks the end, as it were, of a ritual or worship, or a song of joy, or some special way of tasting life's forbidden fruits. It will have none of the taint of the method of destruction and demolition, which had for its object the extinction or elimination of falsehood. Its sole object will be to bring to an end the era of illusion. One of its clear, outstanding features is that it does not confuse illusion with falsehood.

But how exactly the stage of strict, ascetic practice will work is another story. It is for the sociologist or the statesman to lay the foundation of the social order which will work out this stage of abstention. So far as this philosophy is concerned it could only formulate the ethical principle and distinctly explain the relation of absolute equality between the individual centres or groups which are bound to clash. It is for the statesman to apply this theory of equality with all its implications to the two types of social order which the human race has hitherto developed: (*a*) the type which is known as caste; (*b*) the type which is known as freedom. The main issue is not to do away with those historical types altogether and devise something altogether fresh and novel.

For one thing, we cannot do away with the centres or groups that have been historically evolved, nor can we simply ignore the actual conflicts and clashes that have been there all along. In fact it is with these conflicts and clashes that the problems have arisen, and the whole question

of applying the modes of restraint and abstention in the place of warfare and persuasion is a question of dealing with the historical conflicts and clashes. The issue, therefore, is to deal with them by this new method and nothing else. And it is to be earnestly hoped that it will mean unexpected and unusual results.

And it is only after this unusual result has been completely achieved that the stage of harmony can possibly set in. It is only after the spirit of equality has, by the strict application of restraint and mutual sacrifice, brought about a complete disappearance of all conflicts and clashes in the human society that the human race will begin its era of harmony.

And the outstanding peculiarity of this era of harmony will lie in its staging construction, or what we call creation, pure and simple. It will be the era of master-building, the era of fulfilment and realization for which the human race has waited in anxious suspense since the very beginning of its career. And this fulfilment, or master-building, will appear in as many forms as conceivable till its last stage will bring about the unity of the whole universe. The inorganic, organic, and the psychical will all take part in it in ever-varied formations. As in conflict, so in harmony, diversity and variety will rule. There will be a steady and gradual rise in the bulk of the organizations till in one complete form the whole universe will realize the grandest unity conceivable.

CHAPTER XIII

WORSHIP AND IMAGE

Difficult to visualize the stage of harmony—broad suggestions—analysis of worship—our theory—the function of image—review of the two outstanding claims in relation to image worship—our theory of Polytheism and Monotheism.

It is difficult to talk about the stage of harmony with any degree of adequacy. In fact we can only talk about both the stages: (*a*) the stage in which we conclude conflicts; (*b*) the stage in which we build new life—up to a point.

Obviously there will be no change in the constitution of the universe as we leave the stage of illusion and enter the other two stages. When, for instance, abstention begins, it is the old conflicts that will have to be dealt with. Besides, with the recognition of absolute equality and the need of mutual self-discipline, there was bound to be common agreement as to the conditions which made mutual abstention possible. If the issue is not to destroy or suppress one another as it was in warfare and persuasion, it is bound to guarantee minimum security or preservation of the community. The human community, in so far as it was needed to preserve the competing sides, so that they might equally practise mutual self-discipline, is bound to be made secure. There can be no question of interfering with its fundamental needs and preservation.

And it is only after the competing sides have been made secure, that the mode of abstention will begin. In such a community, security will mean opportunity for strict and severe discipline. There will be no room for realisation or achievement in it. And if this is the sense in which the conception of economic security is understood by the prominent economists of the day, there is no reason why we

should not uphold their view. It is not only sound but the only conceivable view to be held.

Similarly, when the stage of harmony arises, the same universe with its constituent groups will continue. Not one centre will disappear whether in the inorganic, organic or physical forms. And the great change that will come will appear in the nature and character of these centres. If we take the human groups, it is to be expected that the centres, while they will retain the physical or biological or psychical phases, will have altogether different types of them. We as human beings will cherish different faiths, develop different arts and cultivate different cultures. So that physically, biologically, and psychically we are bound to be different. There will be an altogether different race. How different we shall be it is impossible to say; for the Gods, arts and cultures that we have hitherto professed will all disappear. And the biological and psychical needs which they satisfied will necessarily disappear too. We shall no longer fight or persuade or practise voluntary abstention. So Freedom and Authority, Infinite and Finite, etc., will all change in their forms. It will be a different Infinite and Finite, Freedom and Authority that we shall cherish, and naturally the economic, cultural and spiritual needs whose objectives are represented by them will change also.

If we want to distinguish metaphysically the nature of this change, we shall have to keep in mind that it will produce what we have called the belief in or certainty about the Absolute Reality. Its chief note consists of that certainty which implied that the claim of the Negative was absolutely neutralized.

After all, the Relative world where all this change takes place has no other significance than the staging of two distinct phenomena or events: (*a*) doubt and confusion about Reality; (*b*) belief in or certainty about Reality. We have explained at great length that the relative world could not have any other significance or end. And it followed that the categories like Infinite and Finite, Freedom and

Authority, etc., whatever their peculiarity, could serve as only so many forms of producing doubt or belief about absolute Reality. Even our economic, cultural and spiritual needs were at bottom nothing but media of realizing the two central ends of the universe.

The fact is that we do not, for instance, eat for the sake of eating, but to prevent or escape the chances of death or extinction. There is nothing that we try to achieve or escape which has not got this aim in view, to avoid the chances of falling into the grip of the Negative. There is no value which is intrinsic in its importance or significance so far as the relative world is concerned. Its quality as value is traceable to its contribution to the neutralization of the Negative, so that the realization of the Absolute may take place automatically. The two stages of conflict and harmony which the relative world has to go through have no meaning apart from the fact that they produce doubt and belief about Absolute Reality. Its contribution consists in that proof which as value or metaphysical truth is just as real as the absolute existence.

And that will mean the end of the discontinuous universe and the restoration of Absolute Reality.

Yet it is impossible to conjecture what that restoration can truly mean. All that we can conceive of is the nature of that certainty or belief. For it will be represented by the realization of the common end or purpose which holds together the life of harmony. It will necessarily mean unity, individuality and personality. In the place of the multiple functioning to realize the common purpose, there will be a singular individual existing as self-sufficient and complete. And as we have already explained, it is this singular or monistic existence which is another name for peace, beauty and truth. If there can be no doubt whatsoever that we can realize peace, beauty and truth, we can do so only in our mystical existence which is necessarily a monistic state. Historically, we can only function to realize it. What we call culture, art and worship are but historical functions

or events whose aim is only to realize and produce beauty, peace and truth.

The nearest thing to beauty, peace and truth that we can historically deal with is the image or concept that refers to them. We do not have to deal with anything but image at any time in our historic existence, whether we are aiming at Divinity or beauty or truth. The living God or beauty or peace never crosses the threshold of our historical home. We realize Divinity, peace and beauty only after we have completely finished the round of our historical functions.

History is but a preparation or function, and image alone is the soul of history. The tradition which with great confidence pitched its tent in history as the rock-bottom of existence was mistaken. History is but part and parcel of the multiple universe, and its natural and normal objective is to resolve itself into the mystical state. There is nothing in it which is intelligible without a direct reference to the mystical state. Its sole end or meaning lies in its deliberate effort to produce the mystical state. If we have to do justice to it, we have to view it in direct relation to the mystical existence. The historical and mystical, if they cannot co-exist, are intimately bound up.

Both the traditions of history: (*a*) the tradition which tried to deny all reality of the mystical on the ground that it was not empirical; (*b*) the tradition which made of the historical the chief source of all concrete existence—were mistaken. We have to keep the mystical existence perpetually in view if we want to get into the heart of concrete existence.

And that is the chief reason why image or concept becomes infinitely more important than what we call sensation or perception. The life of sensation and perception has no meaning apart from the image or concept which it directly implies. The whole of its significance lies in the fact that it is but an attempt to create what an image

refers to, or to defend or destroy that reference. If we cut out the image or the reference that it implies, the life of sensation or perception which is but a function will at once drop down dead. There will be no point to its activity.

And what this clear significance of image in the scheme of the historical process means it should not be difficult to see. If image has to be accepted as the sole meaning or significance of what we call the perceptual fact, we have not only to distinguish between the reality of fact and that of image, but conscientiously hold that God, peace and beauty, our main and only objectives, have to be associated with the image rather than the fact. If worship we must, we can but worship the image of Divinity. To worship God is not to commune with God but to function suitably to realize the image of Divinity. We can either worship or try to realize God or become God. There is no third alternative; for God does not exist while the worship is being performed. It has been a mistaken tradition to believe that God existed as absolute and unlimited.

The whole question of worship centres inevitably in the image of Divinity. If by any chance the image of Divinity is lost, the prospect of worship or any form of religious life will be lost for ever. There is nothing but the image of God in the whole course of our historical experience which can serve as the object for worship. This, to us, is elementary truth.

Nor does the necessity of image cast any reflection upon the devotee in his mood of worship; for worship of image means almost the inconceivable feat of creating Divinity or becoming Divinity. If worship as a historical fact has any meaning, it must be but a prelude to the grand fulfilment for which the whole universe has been waiting for millennia. Could one wish for the human race anything more far-reaching than the creation of God, or realization of Divinity by the supreme human effort of worshipping the image of Divinity?

There are two celebrated traditions in human history which honestly competed with one another in associating or dissociating the image with or from the conception of Divinity, especially with regard to the question of worship. One of these traditions deliberately set the highest value on the image of God, precisely because it was inconceivable to the upholders of the tradition that God as an unlimited being could ever enter into the stream of phenomenal existence. Worship of God, to this tradition, was but a stage in the preparation of human life for the goal of salvation, which meant indispensable release from phenomenal existence. Both phenomenal existence and image of Divinity, which served as the sole object of worship, were but stages of existence leading up to the final state which is unlimited and absolute Reality. What this view missed about image-worship we shall soon see.

To the other tradition, image was literally anathema, and the chief reason for the disgrace of image was that no image could possibly represent the Absolute Divinity. The image was but the after-thought of a human percept. There was no image of God, according to this tradition, which was not made by the mind of man.

There is at least no evidence that any of these images were made by God Himself. No revelation could be taken as an authentic proof that there was an image which God made Himself. Nor was it easy to this tradition to hold that man himself represented the image of God as God created him. There was too much of limitation in man to admit of his divine descent.

If God, therefore, is to be worshipped at all we must scrupulously purify our ritual by cleansing it of any image of Divinity. When we are in the mood or act of worshipping God we must not visualize God or give Divinity any shape or form which the varied sense-experience might suggest. We should not only dissociate it from visual image but protect it from contamination with the tactual, auditory, olfactory

or any other image. Worship of God can take place only in a form in which the immensity and scrupulous eternity of God may not be wantonly soiled.

The intention of this puritan tradition was honest and scrupulous enough, but a difficulty must have arisen sooner or later in the performance of worship which rigidly excluded image or anything which the limited human mind was capable of divining. For even if we may succeed in excluding sense-experience from our rituals, we have to include the constituents of thought. We cannot have a ritual which is free from both sense-experience and thought. And if it is necessary that at least thought must determine the form of worship, even if the senses do not, the taint of limitation or imperfection was bound to enter into the ritual. If senses are found to be imperfect or incomplete, so also should thought, for both equally suffered from the taint of human lineage. And the prospects of worship will certainly not improve if we bring in intuition to replace both sense-experience and thought, for that too is equally human in its origin. Whatever our philosophers might say about the universality of thought, or the unerring precision of intuition, their human character is bound to infect them with limitation if the same feature must inevitably neutralize the pretension of the senses. If limitation or imperfection is the inevitable result of association with the human framework, human thought or intuition cannot escape it any more than human sense-experience.

The tradition, therefore, which honestly sought to make worship scrupulously pure by over-simplifying its ritual, ran the serious risk of losing the chances of worship altogether. For if in worshipping God we are debarred from imagining or conceiving Divinity, we are sure to be reduced to the desperate state of imitating the forms of worship in the inorganic or vegetable world. It will be necessary for us to devise ways and means of worship which the stone or the plant world perhaps is in a better position to devise.

Worship, therefore, we take it, must have been preserved by compromise, wherever this tradition inevitably prevailed. It must either have been made a mere matter of thought in the purest form, analogous to or congruous with the celebrated mode of the Vedantists, or worked into a form which was as scrupulous or ascetic in its imagery as it was possible to be. If the images which reminded one of the human, animal or vegetable world were excluded rigidly from its purified ritual, the harmless inorganic lines and innocent mathematical conceptions must have been warmly and scrupulously utilized. Perhaps a word of mouth or hearsay that a revelation took place, or that it took place in a certain quarter of the earth, might have served wholly for worship, in the same way in which a robust image served for it in the other tradition. The form in which prayers were said, the gestures and postures of the human body necessary for their proper utterance, the rhythm of sounds that brought out chant or incantation, might have been wholly determined by that message that a revelation took place. And finally the form of worship, in spite of its puritan rigidity, invariably expanded in its proportions, as gradually a virile architectural motif gave as it were a solid basis to its formless and imageless dream.

The difference, therefore, between worship in the form of a crusade against image and worship which made almost a rampant use of image was a difference of degree, a mere matter of taste and temperament, or perhaps of regional origin. If the puritan tradition differs from the orthodox form, the difference did not lead to an exclusion of the image from its worship; the image was only softened down to its minimum proportion and survived like the bare outline or the framework of a finished picture.

Whether it meant that it hurt the mind's natural yearning to worship in all conceivable forms is another question. Perhaps it did not suit all minds equally. And if it at all survived in human history it did so in two forms: (*a*) pure

philosophic contemplation in which even the mathematical lines and figures as units of ritual disappear and what is called category or concept takes their place; (*b*) a routine of behaviour in which the images are of the standard forms and are as far removed from the advanced types such as human or animal as possible. This survival meant, by a cruel irony, that the more slender the units of ritual became, the stronger was the urge to propagate that worship unmindful of costs and oblivious of consequences.

Neither tradition, as a matter of course, can be in line with what we have been professing about image-worship. If we preserve the image as the only medium of worship, we do so without any offence to unlimited God, as we do not believe that there was any such God who could take offence. And if, further, the image of Divinity to us is not the existent God of the relative universe, nor by any chance the Absolute God who is by no means unlimited, it is not an incomplete or limited entity, as there is no such thing as limited entity. We do not have to steer between the two conceptions of the unlimited and limited Realities; we can worship the image of Divinity whole-heartedly as the only conceivable object of worship perfectly consistent and completely unique and independent. There is no need or occasion for us to confuse worship of the image of Divinity with the Divine as an existent being, nor is it necessary for us to take worship as but the preparation or instrument with which we could reach or realize Reality. The worship of image is to us a self-sufficient experience which is valued on its own account. The image to us is just as real or valuable as the existent fact, which may or may not follow it. We are confident that while the image exists and refers to a past or future existence, it is in sole occupation of all existence. There is nothing else to compete with it or rival it in power or brilliance. If worship as a fact or need of human existence has to be preserved, we must be honest and scrupulous enough to preserve the image, for it is not

God but the image of Divinity that can make worship possible. And the question whether God would exist as a fact is entirely a matter of our performing God's worship. The existence of God in the relative world which we have described as mystical literally presupposes the performance of worship. And if we are in the mood of a devotee, somehow over-accentuated, we might feel that it was on the strength of human prayer that the whole of God's existence depended. We might, in a moment of sudden inspiration, claim that we not only prove the existence of God but literally are responsible for it. Most authoritative minds have been known to fall into the illusion of this pose. At least one very responsible soul among the acquaintances of the author of this treatise believed that if we depend upon God for the fulfilment of our life's mission, God is powerless to wake up from His deep slumber without the aid of human prayer.

The relation between percept and image was by no means fully understood by tradition. It was not seen that the percept always referred to an image even as an image referred to a percept. There was no percept which did not directly aim at defending or destroying an image, exactly as there was no image which did not refer to some individual existence.

And the term "image" should be used for objectives of all activities for two definite reaons: (*a*) every objective is strictly unique and self-sufficient and, therefore, must be credited with individuality; (*b*) every objective must be sufficiently concrete to satisfy a concrete and particular percept or sensation.

We do, no doubt, have to act either for the Infinite or Finite, Freedom or Authority, etc., but in no case do we act for Infinite or Finite, Freedom or Authority, etc., as bare or empty categories. Freedom or Authority, for instance, in every case has a concrete and unique form. We stand for the equality, liberty, etc., of humanity, or equality,

liberty, etc., of the English race; it is never a stand for equality, as such, or as an abstraction. Even while we discuss equality in the academy, we have a definite picture of it in the shape of equality for every constituent unit of the universe. What is called generality or universality means nothing more nor less than what we call the definite comprehensive outlook. No category ever lost its mooring in the solid foundation of reality, which is not less concrete than what we describe as human feeling or the habitat which the human race made for itself. The philosopher or logician is not after all a dreamer, nor is he so ascetically disposed as to wear out his aspirations for the contemplative heaven by the technique of hair-splitting thought.

If we have to believe in objectives for human activities we have to guarantee their concrete character. We have to see to it that they do not lose distinguishability, definiteness and all that is necessary for satisfying the life of perception and sensation. If we are to call an objective God, we have to associate that Divinity with all that human individuals, in their historical existence, normally and naturally desire. It is inconceivable how we can help calling every objective "image," for it is only an image which has the double feature: (*a*) the feature of concreteness which a percept or sensation is supposed to possess; (*b*) the feature of referring to some existence in the past or future which no percept or sensation possesses.

The whole issue arises with respect to the status or character of relative God who alone constitutes the realm of possibility. It has nothing to do with the Absolute God or Reality. The question is, is relative God bound to be one and scrupulously singular, or must He exist in more than one form?

We have already discussed the multiplicity of Gods. So that the issue about the pluralistic character of God is by no means a difficulty with us. We do hold—there is no escape from it—that relative God is bound to appear as multiple.

The universe, as it must be constituted by multiple centres, cannot possibly help staging multiple Gods, as each and every centre has to represent Divinity. The multiple centres are bound to represent Divinity and Satanity strictly, which means that the main claim of polytheism was fundamentally sound.

But it will be difficult to claim that the polytheist too was of the same opinion as we are about the nature of Divinity. On the contrary, he must have, like the monotheist, fought shy of identifying Divinity with humanity or animality, not to mention the botanical beings or the inorganic entities. The plural claim on behalf of Divinity by the polytheist of history did not imply that Divinity was not unlimited or absolute in character as ours does. No polytheist would for a moment dream of such a blasphemous admission or suggestion.

The traditional claim to polytheism arose on the ground that the number of limited and imperfect beings was many. It was on the double assumption that there were limited and imperfect beings and that their number was large that the need of many unlimited Gods arose.

We make no such assumption as we have no illusions about the distinction between the unlimited and the limited. There is no occasion for us to aspire to Divinity to relieve ourselves from the taint or inconvenience of imperfection. We are free to claim Divinity for ourselves even as we stand here and now.

The issue of many Gods, with us, is the bare and simple issue of many beings, or many animals, trees or stones. We use the term God in addition simply because every existent centre, whether one calls it human or animal, botanical or inorganic, is an instance of Divinity.

But if the term "God" has to be used for anything existent we ought to use the term in more than one sense. We have to use it not only for the existent centre in its capacity as a functioning being or thing but also for the ideal or end

which that function is intended to realize. In other words, the image which forms the goal of functioning, whether in the state of conflict or harmony, must be equally called divine. The divine in this sense is another name for the ideal goal, and if we keep the distinction between the ideal and function in mind, we could talk about a distinction between human and divine. The terms "human" and "divine" will then signify the relative God as "function" and "ideal goal."

And we can analyse further the notion of Divinity if we distinguish between the function and ideal goal in the state of conflict, and the function and ideal goal in the state of harmony. In the state of conflict the divine ideal will live and die as an ideal. The image that will represent it will not lead to a state of realization. It will exist as long as the competing centres in the conflict will put forth effort to defend or destroy it. After the confusion was reached as a result of that mutual attack and defence, nothing more of that divine image will survive. And if it be a fact that the history of the universe and the human race never had any experience till now which was not an experience of conflict, the conception of Divinity never reached the stage of realization. We have been worshipping images of God only, and such images only as could not be realized in the nature of things—we have so far been worshipping only illusions of Divinity.

But as the stage of harmony is reached, the nature of the images will change. They are sure to be realized, and the harmonious co-operation of the different functions will be followed by a state in which the realization of the image will exist as an individual and necessarily personal or mystical being. The term "divine," therefore, can be used in a third sense, the actual realization of the image of Divinity.

In our scheme, therefore, we have four distinct senses in which the term "Divinity" can be used:

(*a*) The sense of the Absolute or God in Himself.
(*b*) The sense of Relative God or God in relation to Satan and His contrary.
(*c*) It is the sense of Relative God that admits of three more interpretations:

(1) The sense of God as functioning to realize an ideal.
(2) The sense of God as the ideal which must be an image.
(3) The sense of God as the realization of the ideal or image, the actual, realized individual, or the personal and mystical unity.

The reason why God is many simply is that the relative world is constituted by multiple centres. As there must be multiple groups of diverse shades and characters, there must be multiple Gods signifying either the diverse functions or the diverse ideals and images. The history of the human race will fully bear testimony to such a conclusion. It is a fact that Gods have been many, and if the monotheistic claim arose it did so on the ground that they must be simplified by an arbitrary method. The monotheist honestly and vigorously claimed that God is one on the ground that some historical person or animal or inorganic being should be regarded as the only God. But the claim still remains unfulfilled. There has been no sign yet of a really one God existing as "the monarch of all he surveys."

We hold that such a God is bound to arise as an existent individual when the stage of harmony will be fully realized. We have no reason to doubt that the universe at large is bound sometime or other to stand as one complete organism in which every conceivable centre will function for one common goal. And it is the fulfilment of that goal which will give rise to the one God, the dream of all monotheistic ambition ever since the claim arose. It will be the final stage of the discontinuous universe which is one of the three universes which the relative world is bound to pass through,

and the fulfilment of this stage will mean the existence of the monistic God, the God who will represent peace, beauty and truth. It will be the sign of the restoration of the Absolute Divinity as it will represent the certainty and proof of the Absolute Reality.

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

By a long and beneficent tradition, the man of literature has the rare privilege of making a comment on himself in the form of an epilogue, and if this salutary tradition is utilized by the philosopher in the shape of a review, it may ensure at least a judicious commentary on his own contribution. An original and apparently strange conclusion cannot be too often repeated and the philosopher's review of his own position ought, at least, to be a safeguard against obvious misinterpretation.

Yet a review by the philosopher himself can neither be a critique of his own work nor a deliberate pleading on its own behalf. Its sole object should be to emphasize the novelty of the new position, if there is any, and present it to the critical public without any plea for recognition. The new claim must stand on its own evidence and make or mar its prospects by an honest confession.

The claim which is strictly fundamental in this metaphysic bears on the import and validity of the Negative, and the valuation that it makes of the status of the Negative is intimately connected with an interpretation of the Law of Contradiction, apparently an extension of the traditional position. A review of this metaphysic, therefore, can mean only a re-statement of that claim with some reference to the orthodox contribution in so far as it is definite and intelligible.

It will be a mistake to argue that the Negative or Non-Being never formed the subject-matter of speculative enquiry or mystical research. And if any comment of ours on the position of our predecessors seems to be drastic or unfair, we owe them an apology. We did not mean to suggest that the Negative was not known to them or that they did not take sufficient pains to unravel its mystery. Any student of philosophy can verify for himself the fact that the

Negative or Non-Being was the stumbling-block in all attempts to give a consistent account of the Positive, or Being. Honestly, the point of our comment was that with all these strenuous efforts our predecessors did not succeed in bringing the Positive and the Negative into line with each other. Tradition to our mind was lost between the belief that the Negative or Non-Being could not co-exist with the Positive and the persistent sense of experiences which implied the Negative necessarily—the experience of failures, frustrations, contradictions, limitations, etc.

But we see no reason why we should not suggest that the Negative was never understood by tradition in the sense which we find it necessary to attach to it. No philosopher could give a consistent account of it even as no thinker could conscientiously banish it from the realm of speculation. Let us explain.

While this metaphysic scrupulously follows the Law of Contradiction and firmly denies that the Positive and the Negative could ever possibly co-exist, tradition seems to have had no such scruple, and honestly held that they could and did co-exist. There are celebrated speculative theories and systems where this co-existence was emphasized. And to the extent tradition did claim that the Positive and the Negative co-existed, it was inevitably liable to violate the Law of Contradiction. The contradiction took place as a matter of fact, although it was not always admitted or regretted.

It is not true, however, that tradition did not make strenuous efforts to prove that the violation was not made. And these efforts appeared principally in the shape of creating two instances of the Positive—Absolute and Relative. The idea or claim was that while the Absolute Positive could have nothing to do with the Negative or Non-Being, the relative Positive could be, without any discredit, in direct relation with the Non-Being. Perhaps the conviction was that by the wholesome method of creating a dual Positive one could accommodate both the Positive and

Negative in the same scheme of existence. And the device would have succeeded if it were not a fact that it was cut into most ungraciously by the grim necessity of preserving both instances of the Positive at the same time and in the same scheme of existence.

It is a fact that though tradition devotedly created two instances of the Positive with the sole object of giving the Negative a chance, it had to make room for both of them in the same scheme. And this unfortunately could not be done with any respect for consistency, for the relation between the Absolute and Relative, frankly, was one of incompatibility. They could perhaps exist alternately if it was necessary that both of them must exist. Co-existence of the absolute and the relative Positive was totally inconceivable. The device failed.

And yet tradition stood committed to this view of incompatibility between the absolute and relative Positive by virtue of the simple fact that it had to create the latter in addition to the absolute Positive to give to the Negative a chance of existence. Such a creation implied that the absolute and relative Positive were incompatible with each other, precisely because they had incompatible functions with regard to the Negative.

Either the absolute Positive was incapable of negotiating with the Negative directly or it was much too absolute for relationship with Non-Being. The relative Positive in consequence had to be created to make up for this inconvenience. The Negative could not be disposed of, as the contradictory or the Non-existent was disposed of. It had a clear claim which had to be scrupulously respected, exactly as the absolute Postive could in no circumstances be mixed up with it.

But could one still classify the absolute and relative Positive as if they were instances of the same class, with no hostility or incompatibility between them? If the functions of the two instances of Positive excluded each other: (*a*) that

of relating the Negative; (*b*) that of excluding the Negative, could one still claim that they were not incompatible with each other? If the absolute Positive could by no chance be in relationship with the Negative, if it had to be domained and situated apart and aloof from the Negative, how could it dwell in the same scheme of the universe where the relative Positive did, in direct relationship with the Negative? Should not the two domains or realms of existence of the absolute and relative Positive be separated by at least an interval which made contact between them well-nigh impossible? And could we bring about that eminently healthy separation if by necessity or helplessness the relation of togetherness or simultaneity had to be assumed between the two instances of the Positive? It is inconceivable that the two forms of the Positive should be credited with incompatible functions with regard to the Negative, and yet be supposed to be perfectly compatible with each other. Tradition was committed to the view of incompatibility the moment it reserved the function of relating the Negative for the relative Positive alone.

It is patent that tradition was at least in an extremely awkward position with regard to the Negative. It could not honestly recognize its claim to existence as if it were on a par with that of the absolute Positive, and yet it had to create a relative Positive, so that it could bring about some relationship between the Positive and the Negative. It was scrupulously determined to protect the absolute Positive from any contamination with the Negative, and yet it had to admit that the relative Positive, which was nothing if not a co-partner of the Negative in the realm of limitation, was but a diluted form of the absolute Positive. There was obvious confusion in the traditional forecast of the Negative, and it may be easier to follow the precise nature of the traditional conception if we analyse a little more fully the conception which this metaphysic upholds. We shall begin with a repetition of our own position.

The Negative to us has to be understood in two distinct forms:

(*a*) The form in which it cannot co-exist with the Positive.
(*b*) The form in which it must be in relation to the Positive.

And if we analyse closely the second form, we shall find that it admits of two distinct stages in turn:

(*a*) The stage in which the relation takes the form of contrariety.
(*b*) The stage in which the relation is one of harmony or complementaries.

The Negative, therefore, has to be understood in three distinct senses, and we have to define each and every one of them after we have made a preliminary attempt to trace the source of their origin. We have in other words to discuss once again the Laws of thought which happen to be the sole basis on which they stand. Let us repeat.

We have already shown that the Law of Identity in its bare symbolic form—A is A, rebuts the presumption that A, instead of being A, pure and simple, might by some arbitrary selection be something else. And that something else could be nothing else but the Negative or Not-A, to which the Law of Contradiction definitely referred. The two laws of thought between them bear adequate testimony to the reality or validity of the Negative. Obviously the symbolic form, "A and Not-A cannot co-exist," in or by itself is sufficient indication of the validity of Not-A. There would be no occasion for the formulation of either law if it were a fact that the Negative was altogether inconceivable and non-existent. The whole point of the laws, if anything, is to distinguish or define the limit or range of the real and valid; and this aim is achieved by drawing a line between the Positive and the Negative, on the one hand, and the Negative and Impossible on the other. The Negative never could be done away with as if it were *non est* or a fiction. If the laws

of thought have to be believed in, the Negative, likewise the Positive, as they both have to be distinguished from the contradictory or impossible, have to be admitted as conceivable and real.

But it does not follow that the Positive and Negative were identified by the laws and considered to be real in exactly the same sense. On the contrary, there is sufficient evidence that the Positive and Negative must have been considered to be real or existent in altogether different senses. In any case, the laws made two definite implications:

(*a*) There are two different types of existence.
(*b*) The Positive and the negative had different types or forms of existence.

Let us discuss these two fundamental issues.

As regards the types of existence, they are deducible from two obvious claims that the Law of Contradiction is universally credited to have made:

(*a*) A and Not-A, or the Positive and the Negative, cannot co-exist.
(*b*) If A and Not-A co-exist, the contradictory, or the impossible, appears.

The first claim undoubtedly means that there is such a thing as absolute or non-related existence. If we have to accept the statement "A and Not-A cannot co-exist," we have to accept the notion of absolute existence. And absolute existence, arising from the nature of the law, need not be understood as anything but non-related existence. We cannot derive from the injunction of the law that it might also mean eternal, permanent existence.

Nor can we argue on the strength of the law that it was the Positive and not the Negative, or the Negative and not the Positive that was capable of existing in a non-related form. There was nothing in the Law of Contradiction to indicate that conclusion. The law asserts only the absolute type of existence without specifying whether it belonged to

the Positive or the Negative. It is altogether for an independent enquiry to determine which of the two types of Reality can claim to be absolute.

But it does not follow that the law, by its frank statement about non-co-existence, should be taken to imply that either the Positive or the Negative must be non-existent. It is no part of the law to suggest that only one of them is conceivable or real, while the other was incapable of existence. To suggest definitely that either the Positive or the Negative can claim to have absolute existence is not the same thing as to suggest that only one of them was capable of existing. The alternative to absolute existence is not non-existence.

In other words, the Law of Contradiction did not imply that the Positive and Negative were contradictories in the traditional sense, so that one of them could contradict the other. What it implied was that A and Not-A were contraries which meant that in at least some sense only one of them could exist and not both.

At least one clear meaning of mutual opposition or incompatibility must be that neither of the opposing terms can realize itself in an absolute sense unless they have the chance of existing independently of each other.

The famous statement of the law—A and Not-A cannot co-exist should, therefore, be taken to mean two things:

(*a*) A or Not-A can exist by itself in which case the type of existence has to be regarded as absolute.

(*b*) They are contraries, so that if they by some chance made an effort to exist together, at least the contradictory was sure to result from that desperate device.

And if we found that the Positive did inevitably exist as the absolute, that discovery was neither a contradiction of the Law of contradiction nor a derivation from that law. The absolute existence of the Positive is an unquestionable fact, which was derived from an independent enquiry; and because it is unquestionable, the application of the law to

the Positive becomes both possible and necessary. That means equally that the absolute existence of the Negative is, *ipso facto*, excluded, although the Negative is not for that matter identified with the non-existent.

What alone necessarily turns out to be incapable of existence is the contradictory, as the same Law of Contradiction in another equally definite statement makes absolutely clear. A line is drawn by it between the Positive and Negative on the one side and the contradictory or the non-existent on the other. The impossible or inconceivable, under its injunction, can only result from the co-existence of the Positive and Negative. It is unthinkable that either the Positive or the Negative can be exclusively responsible for the contradictory. If the contradictory is to be there at all both the Positive and the Negative must be there to give birth to it. In no other way can the contradictory appear. The first statement—A and Not-A cannot exist, therefore, generates in itself two types of existence:

(*a*) Absolute and non-related.
(*b*) Another type which is distinguishable from both the absolute type and the contradictory or the non-existent.

An exactly similar conclusion can be drawn about types of existence from the second statement of the law—if A and Not-A exist together, the contradictory is the necessary result. The statement, to begin with, could not be taken as only an emphatic form of the first—A and Not-A cannot co-exist. We do not simply repeat the impossibility of co-existence of A and Not-A in the second statement—if A and Not-A existed together, the contradictory or the impossible would result.

And the evidence of its originality is that the notion of the contradictory or the non-existent which it introduces is a valid notion. In some form or other, experience has to record the contradictory or the impossible. Besides, there is no mention or suggestion of the contradictory or the

non-existent in the first statement. We should in no circumstances confuse the two statements: (*a*) A and Not-A cannot both exist; (*b*) if A and Not-A existed together the contradictory would result.

The point of the second statement, to be precise, is that A and Not-A can exist together, which possibility was totally denied in the first; and their co-existence is expected to produce the contradictory which, also, was not on the horizon of the first statement. A and Not-A, obviously, are expected by the second statement to change their character so that they may co-exist instead of excluding each other. In the sense in which existence in the first statement was meant, A and Not-A could not exist together. The issue then was not what would happen if they existed together—co-existence was impossible to them. Evidently only one of them could exist, while the other which did not exist was reduced to absolute nothingness. Exactly opposite is the sense in which the second statement understood existence. It not only made co-existence of A and Not-A possible, but made experience of the contradictory possible too.

The Law of Contradiction may be taken to imply the absolute or non-related state of the Positive or Negative as well as the related state which produced the contradictory. We do get two types of existence, Absolute and Relative, although we do not get anything more than the state of contrariety in the relative state.

It might be worth while therefore to enquire whether the co-existence of A and Not-A which the second statement guarantees must necessarily produce the contradictory alone or is capable also of producing the complementary. If the main issue centres in the notion of co-existence, if what the second statement guarantees is the fact of relationship between A and Not-A, does it follow that it is only the contradictory that can result from that relationship?

Let us enquire.

As we have already seen, instead of the absolute Positive

and Negative, it is the possibilities of the Positive and Negative that exist in the relative state. It is, emphatically, the realm of possibilities, and nothing happens here which is not open to possibilities alone. Neither the Positive nor the Negative as such has any chance of functioning in this state. But if it is necessary that the possibilities of A and Not-A must exist in relationship, it follows that they must exist in every conceivable form of relationship. The contradictory therefore cannot be the only result of their co-existence. The complementary too must be taken equally as a conceivable form. A and Not-A, in other words, must not only meet and produce confusion; they must produce the consistent truth or perfect realization as well. We have discussed all this many a time in the body of the book.

We may now conclude this review of the Positive and Negative by defining the meaning of the term "Negative" as distinguished from the Positive and the contradictory.

The Negative, to begin with, has two definite meanings:

(*a*) The Negative as merely conceivable and incapable of existing side by side with the Positive is the agent or principle with which all notions of destruction, extinction, etc., are associated. The presence of such a negative, if it were a fact, would have involved the complete annihilation of all values. The result would have been blank nothingness, the spectre which never ceased to haunt the mind of the human race. The Positive by way of comparison with the Negative is the creator or preserver of values. The presence of such a Positive, if it be a fact, is bound to guarantee the realization of values.

The Positive and Negative, therefore, normally speaking, cannot co-exist and it is gratifying to observe that our discovery, at the end of a long enquiry, that it was the Positive that was absolute, ruled out the dark Negative altogether. We can confidently assert that the universe never was at the mercy of pure destruction. We have been under the illusion that it was.

(*b*) The Negative as existent has altogether a different meaning, and we cannot formulate its meaning adequately unless we keep in mind the precise nature of its existent form. And that form leads to both contrary and complementary relationship. We have discussed all this more than once.

It may be repeated, however, that the Positive and Negative both undergo changes in their character and meaning as we pass from the absolute to the relative state, and from one stage of related state to another.

Evidently the Positive in its absolute state is nothing but spontaneous realization, and when we come to its relative state it is partly an effort to realize the absolute state which fails. It is also an effort to realize the necessity of Reality which does not fail. Similarly, the Negative in its conceivably absolute form is nothing but the destructive principle which cannot exist, while in its existent state, it makes an attempt to realize the destructive principle, which is bound to fail. And yet, even the function of the Negative changes as it enters into a relationship with the Positive in a state of harmony. And here nothing happens which is worse than the state of mere difference or the absence of complete identification between the Positive and Negative.

And this review may now be concluded with two claims ou behalf of our interpretation:

(*a*) It has vindicated the law of thought and the place of logic in human endeavour to understand the meaning of the universe.
(*b*) It has brought Reality itself very much closer to human comprehension.

We shall say a word or two about both the claims.

As regards the vindication of logic, the evidence for it is supplied by the structure of the whole metaphysic. We never took a step in the whole enquiry which was not guaranteed by the laws of thought. We did not once refer to any experience which was esoteric, artistic, scientific or

pragmatic. Even if the philosophers who are in charge of the traditional output of thought fail to accept our conclusion, they will have no reason to deny its strictly logical character.

But we do not suggest that we utilized nothing but the laws of thought in building up this system. We cannot repeat too often that the whole enquiry began in what we normally accepted as fact. The preliminary question was, how much of what we assumed to be fact was truly and really indisputable. The enquiry depended upon both fact and the laws of thought and no enquiry could be either formal or material exclusively. If by any chance the fact with which the enquiry began disappeared as a result of it, the enquiry itself would have disappeared too. No laws of thought could guarantee after that a survival or resurrection of human experience. In fact, the absolute sceptic of tradition tried to build on just some such catastrophe, and it was fortunate for human history that the sceptic failed.

But the main structure of this metaphysic did not arise before the laws of thought were reinterpreted. In fact it was the fresh analysis of the Positive and Negative on the basis of the new interpretation of the laws of thought that made the new philosophy possible. If the interpretation stands and is not swallowed up by the dark gloom of the absolute sceptic, the structure will stand too.

And this is all that we mean by the claim that our account of Reality is purely logical in its origin and stands wholly on the laws of thought.

But we do not claim that because we discovered the logical structure of the universe, we built up the universe itself. To say that the realm of possibility, for instance, has a central end and is subject to a universal rhythm in the shape of three successive stages, etc., is not to produce that universe as one continuous piece of complete reality. In fact, as the universe, by its nature, has to be discontinuous and continuous, it can never stand like a finished picture.

The structure itself is no doubt a solid fact; it is the only

evidence of our philosophic existence. It is, in other words, what we have called philosophic belief and certainty. But a philosophic fact is by no means the only fact by which either Reality or the philosophers themselves could be known. It is by no means either a permanent feature of human experience or of the universe where that experience appears.

The enquiry therefore is bound to arise, whether it is sufficient in itself or requires the verification of the economic or physical existence. Even after the philosopher has proved to the hilt that God or the universe was such and such, the human mind still has to live a life with that God, or in the universe which is his creation.

The philosophic certainty does not mean the final stage of human experience. Art, culture and religion precede or succeed it, either to give it a chance to verify itself or to mature its keen aspiration into a life of action or emotion.

Even if logical certainty is found to be serene and ascetically pure, in which not even the echo of an emotion can be heard, it is only one among many values that God's universe created for the human race.

It can, by no means, be the only test of satisfied or peaceful living.

But it may be asked, in what way exactly is the logical system that we have suggested calculated to bring Reality itself closer or nearer to human comprehension?

Perhaps the best way to answer this question is to find out first what the human mind, normally speaking, has been looking for in all endeavours of life all these centuries. If we know exactly how it came to formulate the theory of Reality, we shall be in a position to ascertain if this logical system made any substantial difference to the traditional comprehension.

It may be assumed without technical preparation that the issue before the human mind fundamentally has been nothing but the security and certainty about its future. As

the human enquiry started under the pressure and strain of human life every other issue, whether of the near or remote environment or the divine and satanic claim, must have sprung directly or indirectly from this human and personal angle.

Man must have started from himself and neither from outside or beyond himself.

But the enquiry about security or certainty of man's future could not have begun unless it were a fact that man had to struggle with his environment and very much to his disadvantage. Very early in human speculation the feature of his environment which did not coincide with human interest must have formed the chief subject for investigation. There can be no doubt that man found his environment baffling on the whole and had to theorize about the irrational, capricious and even demoniacal. Even though it filled him at times with dreams and visions of idyllic existence, he could not shake himself free from a dread that there was a factor or agent in it which was overpowering. He was forced to question his own power and capacity to live up to his ideal and fulfil his mission in life.

And one inevitable result of this disagreeable experience was that he had to look for a power or agent in the same environment which could be more than a match for the evil that overpowered him. There was no other way by which he could safeguard his interest or escape ruination at the hands of the evil one. That was how it might have struck him. Sooner or later, in all human endeavour to live two distinct notes were struck:

(*a*) The note which emphasized the need and value of challenging the hostile agent of the environment with human strength and power.
(*b*) The note which emphasized the need of discovering a greater power than the Demon, and a beneficent authority.

And between them these two notes formed the main

theme of the historic symphony we call human civilization, and the movements which this symphonic endeavour to solve human problems embodied gradually became incalculable. We never heard any other theme in the whole concert of human history, nor did the music which this theme developed in the course of ages ever sound peace or even rest to the human soul. There has been elation and hopefulness as the direct result of that central theme but the tragic prevailed invariably in the end.

It is for the historian to give us an account of this central theme; what we have to discuss in this review is the true meaning of its origin.

We have to ask whether man, in looking for the agent or power which alone could make his environment safe and secure outside his own personal self, did or did not take a step which was sure to fail him in the end. Could man with any reason depart from his own personal angle, his own individuality with which he was born, and which alone made all that he claimed as significant values? Was it conceivable that any Power, however great, could help him if it were a fact that his own self and individuality was tainted with deficiency in its core? Was it necessary to believe that he was powerless and at the mercy of the Demon simply because he had not the chance of escaping the disagreeable and unpleasant?

The reply is that the whole procedure of man at this stage was altogether mistaken; it was fatal for him to assume that deficiency formed the very core of human individuality. What is truly deficient or liable to be frustrated in its aim could not be made efficient or successful. And so the prospects of human security were bound to be lost for the time being between the two historic instances of what may be called surrender of the human soul or claim:

(*a*) Surrender to the Demon out of a sense of helplessness.
(*b*) Surrender to an omnipotent Power for protection and help.

Human civilization, as far as we can judge, is nothing but a record of these two fatal decisions in the career of humanity. In so far as man argued that his failures to realize his mission could be traced only to the machinations of an overpowering agent, he had to offset the unfortunate conclusion by assuming that the same environment must have had a beneficent Power, with even greater authority and strength. The two surrenders were not only facts but inevitable after that fateful argument.

And we have shown what followed in the course of ages as a result of giving effect to his belief in the incarnate evil and omnipotent God.

Human history or human civilization which is the direct result of this belief produced the two types which we have described as the soldier and the ascetic, and no other type that we know of, unless we take scepticism and the mood of compromise as a rational and consistent feature of human activity. The former has been what may be called the inflated type, which was built on the bold technique of making up for the innate deficiency of man by faith that the omnipotent Power somehow embodied itself in man. Similarly, the latter formed the deflated type, built on the technique of purification, a process of wearing out the innate deficiency of the human soul. While the one grew in proportion and waged warfare constantly, the other shrank into a flame-like existence and preached discipline and sacrifice. Destruction of life and suppression of belief seemed to be the only concrete result that followed from these two historic types which grew out of the same endeavour to find the omnipotent in the environment of man. Security never was achieved; human home never became free or peaceful. The two surrenders did not succeed.

And it is not necessary that we should discuss whether the ideas of God or Demon, the chief contribution of this age-long search of man, served man better as an account of Reality than as a source of help in his struggle with the

environment. The whole of the metaphysic stands as a repudiation of the claim that the God or Demon of tradition was the only evidence of what Reality there is. These two central conceptions of human achievement are neither accurate nor adequate for a description of Reality, nor potent nor efficient enough to serve as the solution of the problems of human existence. Reality to man is still just as enigmatical as it ever was, and the wolves never left his door for a day in spite of colossal attempts to destroy them. It is still as difficult as ever for any mind to make sure whether God rules in the universe, or the Demon. The human home stands in the same precarious state as it did before speculation began to account for its troubles.

And yet the simple explanation of this historic failure may be easily found in the initial blunder that human mind committed when it interpreted its frustrations as a mark of deficiency and limitation. That indeed was the original sin of man, if this time-honoured phrase has to be retained with a meaning in our vocabulary. It was not man's curiosity to know that misled him and drew him into the tangle of precarious living. If there was anything wise in the human framework it was this curiosity to know, and it may be incidentally mentioned that perhaps the most ancient form of prayer that human history has recorded is directly based on nothing but the need of more and more light about the universe. The Hindu in his daily prayer does not ask for anything else but more light of knowledge. The parable that made of the curiosity to know an original sin was a major blunder in human belief. The original sin appeared in man's repudiation of his own individuality, in mistaking what was after all a mere failure or frustration of purpose for a destruction of value. Man suddenly became weak and took failure to mean a loss rather than a form of discipline. He was scared out of his wits and dreaded that his failure meant nothing less than extinction or annihilation of all that was valuable. There was no Demon in the universe; but the

spectre of a demon was bound to torture man if he was so bereft of sense as to disown his own individuality. Nothing on earth could save man either from torture or from aimless wandering, once he had laid the axe at his own root.

But there was no occasion for man to commit the original sin and in nervous haste charge human personality with innate deficiency. There was no such thing as deficiency, whether in man or Reality. The truth is that man is literally divine and nothing less; and if conflicts still appear in his career on earth and lead to failures and frustrations which unnerve him, they do not imply that he is not divine or that his universe has a Demon who can annihilate him. The second half of this treatise is one long argument in support of this theory. We may only add that Reality is not as tradition took it to be, whether we consider its divine feature or the satanic accident. If we can disabuse our mind of the need of omnipotent God and incarnate evil, we can easily get hold of the true conception of Reality and after that freedom can be easily secured, provided we do not hesitate to repent of the "original sin." The truth to be emphasized is that the form which this philosophy attributes to Reality removes the possibility of infecting Reality with the distinction between the limited and unlimited—the primal source of human indignity. It departs from the false tradition of subservience or humility and puts man into intimate contact with Reality. It removes all distinction between man and God or man and Demon.

We shall deal with two more questions and close the review:

(*a*) Our account of the religious history of the human race.
(*b*) Our contention that both the methods of tradition: (i) the method of warfare, (ii) the method of persuasion—have failed.

As regards our account of religious history we do not claim to have anticipated the historian. Ours is only an inter-

pretation of history, an attempt to indicate the main motives or principles that might have worked steadily to shape its course. It is no part of our claim to urge that the actual events in the religious history of mankind took an alignment precisely in the shape or form of those motives or principles. On the contrary, the principles and motives, as far as we know, never had it their own way, to run a consistent and unambiguous course. In the actual working out of the religious motives the human mind periodically had to leave the path of strict consistency. But there can be no doubt that we traced the true vein of religious motives and principles when we referred to the two schools of the Revelationist and Absorptionist groups of the human race. And the issue as far as we can see about the nature and character of human groups is not whether they were precisely and scrupulously one or the other but whether they were predominantly the one or the other. We have no doubt that the historian will find sufficient justification for our view in the actual alignment of the religious history of mankind.

And we are confident that the historian will support our claim that both the methods of human history—the method of warfare and the method of persuasion—met in the long run with the same failure.

We have discussed the method of warfare; and it might be worth while to show why the method of persuasion failed, exactly as the method of warfare did.

There are a few outstanding points to be noted as implications of this method:

(*a*) The method of persuasion implied the theory of degrees, which in the last analysis meant the theory of whole and part.

(*b*) Differences, by this method, are not regarded as so essential as the agreements.

(*c*) The individual as individual, as distinguished from the group and unity, is not valued on its own account, but deliberately sacrificed to the group and unity.

(*d*) Suppression of the individual and depreciation of

differences inevitably result, along with its peculiar achievement.

(*e*) The social order which is run on the method naturally falls a victim to periodic internal disorder or revolution or external invasion.

If our philosophic position is at all sound, the main assumption about persuasion is wrong—difference of degrees has no consistent significance, and is unintelligible. The whole method of persuasion was based on a mistaken logical view of differences; co-existence of agreement and difference is a contradiction in terms. Agreement and difference have to be conceded separate existences if both of them have to be preserved. The evidence of our comment has been fully dealt with in the body of the book.

But if the theory of whole and part or difference of degree is actually assumed, differences are bound to be regarded as inessential. They could not be denied as facts; but as they are taken to mean a relation of degree, they cannot be considered as essential. There was no reason why a relation of difference should be taken seriously when one of the terms of the relation was supposed to be less complete and partially true. One could only reckon with it as a historic fact, but that does not mean that one must make a valuation of it as if it were essential or something on which the success and prospects of life depended.

But the assumption was groundless and the conclusion was false and that for at least the following reasons, as far as we can see:

(*a*) The relation of difference was a relation of contrariety. The two interests or views which happened to differ were or could be neither different degrees of the same truth or value, nor contradictories like truth or value. They were contraries. We have discussed the point at great length.

(*b*) Differences, therefore, must be considered to have their own value and importance, which is or can be by no means less valid or significant than that of agree-

ments. We have shown how they represented the case of negative values.

(*c*) It follows that we should not repudiate or dismiss the life of differences as if it were waste or enigma or sheer misfortune. As we have seen already, the life which produces conflicts and sharp differences offers us an opportunity for clean, healthy, and energetic living just as much as the life of harmony does. They are different and constitute two types of existence.

It does not, however, follow that we should deal with them by the method of warfare or persuasion. The only suitable and efficient method with which we could reap the full harvest from the life of conflict is the method of mutual and voluntary abstention. We have suggested the method as the ethical principle of this metaphysic.

This is not the place, however, to discuss the issue between the individual and the group, or freedom and unity. It is a sociological issue and ought to be dealt with in the course of our ethical investigation. Incidentally the reader may be told that the author of this treatise ventured to make a very broad analysis of the two historic types of social order: (*a*) the group, (*b*) the individual—in a small treatise, before embarking on the metaphysical enquiry. It is this analysis that should be elaborated in a sociological account of human experience if we want to do full justice to the practical and sociological problems.

We have to postpone the discussion of the individual and the group, or freedom and unity, etc., till we come to our ethical enquiry.

In the meantime, we can only anticipate the conclusion that the social order which deals with the method of persuasion emphasized the value of the group or unity, and had to depreciate the value of the individual and freedom. Why and how that depreciation took place, can be dealt with only in a future investigation.

What can be mentioned at the moment is that neither freedom nor the individual as such could be recognized by

the group order. Suppression of both had to be faced and all achievement was bound to be limited to the strict and precise claims of the group as such.

It is a very interesting sociological study to compare the achievements and failures of the two types of social order which were deliberately patterned on the group and the individual. Of neither could it possibly be said that a clear record of achievement, undefiled by destruction or suppression of claims, was the result of their social activity. Nor could it be claimed that either of them devised a scheme of life which could resolve the fundamental difficulties between the competing claims such as freedom and unity, order and individuality, life of spirit and life of body, etc. In neither of them did any resolution of the outstanding conflicts take place. What was claimed by both of them as resolution of conflicts was but a compromise and nothing more or less.

And if claims are still being made by both of them to the effect that they have solved the problem of unity and freedom, there must be some serious flaw in their conclusion.

We will take an illustration.

The chief historic centre of the social order which experimented with the group, as distinguished from the individual, definitely claimed that it had successfully resolved among other things the conflict of religious faiths. If there is any one place on earth where different faiths, instead of clashing with one another perpetually lived together in peace, and where no one faith prevailed to the exclusion of every other, it must be in that centre and that centre alone. And the claim which definite communal success of religious faiths stimulated in that centre, as to the possibility of such a realization in every other centre, has at least the ring of plausibility about it. If one instance of human society can resolve its religious conflicts, why not every other centre?

But the claim, to be precise, has to be tested in the *milieu* of the history that gave birth to it before it can be admitted as final.

In the first place it is not a fact that the faiths under consideration never came into conflict with one another. As a matter of fact, the question of the resolution of conflicts would not have arisen if the conflicts had not taken place.

In the second place if some kind of resolution of the conflict did take place, it does not follow that it must have been of a kind which can be accepted as genuine or as satisfactory to all.

As far as we know the resolution took place in a form which admits of two alternative interpretations:

(*a*) The resolution followed on the ground that the different faiths which competed with one another came to accept the theory that their differences were differences of degree, so that conflict among them was neither necessary nor desirable.

(*b*) Or the resolution might have taken place on the ground that the competing faiths were prepared to admit that they all belonged to some common unity or principle of which they were but varied instances.

We do not know of any other explanation of the fact of resolution that did actually take place.

And if we are at all correct in our surmise, it followed that the validity or stability of the resolution of conflicts depended upon the validity or adequacy of the theories we have just mentioned. If the theories under consideration are valid, the actual resolutions were bound to be stable. And for exactly the same reason, if neither theory can be accepted as consistent and true, the actual fact of the resolution of conflict cannot be taken as an evidence of its validity or stability.

To indicate the simple fact of different faiths living together in peaceful amity, without any interference with one another, is not necessarily to prove that there was either permanent peace or complete satisfaction in the core of that historic fact. If a resolution of the conflict of faiths takes place on the mistaken view that differences are but differ-

ences of degree or instances of a class, it can not expect either to last long enough or escape a severe reaction sooner or later.

And the historian, we venture to hold, is sure to discover that the resolution of conflicts did not perpetuate itself or avoid an inevitable reaction. If we follow the history of the peoples among whom it took place, closely, the reactions are bound to appear to any unbiassed mind.

And yet we do not offer all this as historian's evidence; that is to be given by the historian. Our evidence is altogether logical; it stands on a disproof of the two claims about degrees and instances of a class. In so far as we hold that both of them, as logical theories, are contradictory, we claim that the historian will confirm our conclusion without fail. We have discussed that logical point at great length already.

And if now we make an estimate of the same claim for resolution by the method of warfare, we would unhesitatingly make the same observation. There was no resolution but only an illusion about it. Warfare never was completed, and so no religious faith succeeded in surviving at the cost of all the others longer than was guaranteed by the periodic exhaustion of its antagonists.

No historian can escape the vigorous claims to resolution of the outstanding conflicts among those who professed either the one or the other type of social order. And resolutions did take place, if we mean by resolution of faiths either the prevalence of one faith over all the others by the method of open violence and propaganda, or the survival of all the faiths in a hierarchic relation of degrees, or as but instances of a principle or unity which counted as the only thing truly valuable by the method of persuasion.

But the unavoidable recognition of such facts could only justify the claim that there was such a thing as illusion of the resolution of conflicts. There was no evidence in that recognition that human mind did truly resolve the conflicts

of faiths or any other interest of human life, instead of merely creating an illusion about it. The resolutions were facts but facts may be illusions just as they may be truths, and all cases of resolution of conflicts so far have been nothing but illusory facts, however disagreeable it may sound to our traditional ear.

And perhaps one may suggest in extenuation of these illusions that they were all that could take place in the history of human experience so far. It was not possible that human mind could go straight for the true resolution of conflicts without going through the illusive stages. For, after all, there is nothing to choose between the one or the other form of resolution from the standpoint of values. The universe makes no preferential distinction between illusion and truth.

Besides, historically speaking, the two types of illusive resolutions had an importance all their own, and could never be confused one with another or be judged as a superior or inferior type of illusion. As they both were compromises or illusions, they both had to be recognized and kept as rigidly separate from each other as possible. The centre where the illusion of group life at the expense of individual life arose had nothing to do with the centre where the opposite illusion prevailed. Similarly, the centre where the illusion of individual life at the expense of group life arose was absolutely distinct from the other. They were utterly incompatible with each other. And if attempts in history were made, in spite of their futility, to convert the group order to the individual order, they could create only an interval or interlude of calamity, during which mankind was called upon either to destroy or defend some well-established article of faith. Invariably, as it was a foregone conclusion, the attempts failed as they were bound to do, and the original social centres recovered their normal form as inevitably as they had lost it for a time.

The sociologist can easily point out how, after periodic

invasions to which the social centre which recognized the group form was subjected, what is called the caste or group order, which was its main theme, invariably prevailed. All the invaders, reformers and revolutionaries whatever their apparent or temporary domination, were sooner or later assimilated into the mould of life which the group ideal evolved, in spite of the fact that they created for a time the suspension of the caste activity.

And if we turn to the other social centre where the individual, instead of the group or caste, formed its main motive, there again the creed form in the long run equally invariably prevailed. Some noted historians have shown conclusively how this centre was no more immune from invasion from the outside world or internal discontent than its opposite the group centre, although the technique of invasion differed considerably in the two instances. But the ideal of the group or unity, which was utilized as a weapon with which to suppress the ideal of individualism or freedom, did not succeed in permanently affecting the individual creed. Sooner or later, whatever changes it might have introduced as a result of successful penetration or domination, they were neutralized by the revival of the claim to absoluteness of value and exclusive authority.

To this day both centres have survived with equal potency, and it will be a mistake to suppose that the remaining portion of the twentieth century will see the disappearance of either the one or the other. The success which attended their respective attempts at survival so far is not an evidence of any exclusive prospect; if it is an indication of anything it must be of either mutual survival, or a wholesale change in the horizon of both. If a survival of the group or individual centre is not an argument that either the conflict between the individual and group has been resolved or the individual or the group has been established for good and all, it can hardly be a sign of their exclusive preponderance in the future. If no group order can claim on the strength of its

survival in the twentieth century, after long periods of suppression and domination, that it has the potency to subdue for ever the individual order, no individual order can build up the prospects of a future dominion over the four quarters of the globe on the strength of a similar survival. Two alternatives are open to them:

(*a*) They may go on repeating the stages of alternate success and failure of history.
(*b*) They may be subjected to a new principle of ethics and be overhauled by a new interpretation of individual and group.

We are confident that the possibilities of repetition have been exhausted and history will from now enter on a new grade of evolution in which the second course will be followed.

There will gradually be an end of the long process of clash between the two historic centres of human effort to live socially and attempts will be made to live the full life of social existence rather than the illusive perfection of either group or individual life. How this will take place will form the subject-matter of our next attempt to analyse the sociological ambition of man in terms of our own ethics.

The review has been rather long, and we may conclude it with the earnest hope that our final conclusion, however strange and unusual, may not make the difficult art of living even more severe for the human race. Our sole object, as we could test it during at least two generations of continued meditation, has been to straighten out the tangles of human experience; if anything, we wanted honestly to see more light on the nature of the universe where we belong. The mysterious outline of the universe never appeared to us to be its permanent framework. Long before we had the bold ambition to strike across its nebulous mass, we wanted to explore the length and breadth of the universe. With almost a naïve faith we believed that if the universe was our home, there should be no barrier in it to prevent man from

exploring any field in its vast compass. Neither the mysterious region which preceded the birth of man nor the baffling darkness that still follows the inscrutable phenomenon of death should, it seemed to us, be an overpowering obstacle in our path. It was our naïve conviction that we should be able to feel confident and balanced in any unknown or unfamiliar region of the universe. And as for the calamities to which man was perpetually subjected, whether at the hands of his fellow-men or from the world adjoining his human home in a living or non-living form, they did not appear to be insurmountable, not to say mysterious, provided man had the time and opportunity to study the nature of relationships that formed his life on earth between the two known moments of birth and death.

Whether this long-cherished object with the faith in the clarity or sanity of our home, the universe, has been realized even partially by our humble efforts, it is for our reader to judge. We can only add that the structure which evolved to realize that object in the course of nearly a quarter of a century, gave us at least a standing-ground and filled us with the hope that it might be possible with its aid to walk with the head erect through any cloud or storm where the elements foregather. If our finding that the universe has a central theme and is subject to three relationships and runs through the rhythm of conflict, construction, and unity is true, there is nothing to fill man with the proverbial sense of dread wherever he may be or however placed. If the full blast of a life of conflict can only induce an atmosphere of doubt, if there is or can be no element even in the extreme tension of conflict which could precipitate real death and extinction, we could always keep courage in our heart and meet all environment as though it were nothing if not a whet to our appetite. The civilized man of the future need no longer be afraid of his environment, whatever its appearance; he should be in a position instead to look for intimate contact or warm relationship, whether in the midst of a desert or the

depth of a forest or in the heart of the animal world, just as much as he hopes to do in the company or society of men. Nor is it necessary that he should grieve over the unknown which follows death, as if the spectres collect their offensive projects against man behind the ramparts of the historic known. If his home, the compact economy of the universe, is gracious, if he is assured that he is subject to the same law everywhere and is given the chance of realizing fresh forms of the same life wherever he may be, it will be a miracle if he does not seek out the stars for intimate communion, and look for contact with the unknown and indecipherable beings and spirits, even as he makes love to his fellow-creatures and dances the ritual of his religious life.

And the home of the civilized man after this can be built only in the heart of the universe rather than on the mere shores of a lake, or the peak of a mountain, or the arboreal shelter of green-flowing meadows. And the vision that will lead him on from moment to moment or age to age, or from one birth to another, will spring from his undying faith in immortality—his divine attribute—to keep on moving till all the shores of all the limitless oceans of profound mystery have been reached. With the spectre of extinction for ever banished from the region of his home, the universe, and with the calm and quiet assurance that wherever he may stray, in deep sleep or keen wakefulness, he is never outside the boundary of his home or kindred spirits, he will walk with firm steps and assured success. After so many vicissitudes, it can be but one long, endless course of exploring the mysteries of beauty, truth and peace, for which the human race in the neighbourhood of the whole creation has waited with patience, almost breathless with dread. And it is time that we take leave of our reader with the heartiest wish that he should claim his own share in that endless fruition of long-deferred human hopes, never again to fall into the hands of doubt.

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by Wilbur Marshall Urban

Author of *Valuation: The Theory of Value, The Intelligible World*, etc.

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